"All the News That's Fit to Print"

The New York Times

LATE EDITION

Today, sun giving way to clouds, high 70. **Tonight,** cloudy, rain late, low 58. **Tomorrow,** cloudy, cooler, rain, gusty winds, flooding possible, high 62. Weather map, Page B10.

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NEW YORK, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2023 — $4.00

TODD HEISLER/THE NEW YORK TIMES

'A NEW ELLIS ISLAND' The Roosevelt Hotel has become New York City's main intake center for homeless migrants. But local leaders are trying to restrict who comes. "We don't have capacity" to provide shelter for all who seek it, said Gov. Kathy Hochul. Page A20.

Biden Offers Step to Relieve Migrant Crisis

Praise and Criticism for Work-Permit Plan

By MICHAEL D. SHEAR and LUIS FERRÉ-SADURNÍ

The demand that President Biden ease the migrant crisis threatening to overwhelm American cities came privately, from the New York governor to top White House officials. It came publicly, in angry statements from Democratic and Republican officials around the country. It came from scores of immigrant rights groups.

On Wednesday, the Biden administration relented.

In one of the largest such actions ever taken, the Department of Homeland Security said that almost a half-million immigrants in the United States who had fled Venezuela's humanitarian crisis would be allowed to immediately apply for work authorization. By allowing them to legally earn income, the change could alleviate the costly burden of housing the refugees in major cities across the country. The migrants also will be protected from deportation for at least the next 18 months.

Administration officials say the decision was made, as required by law, because of the worsening conditions in Venezuela, not the situation in New York or other cities. But for Mr. Biden, the move is sure to inflame the already charged political debate, both inside his own party and with Republicans, about how to confront the surge of migration from South and Central America.

The situation at the border, where officials on Monday arrested 8,000 migrants — close to record highs in May — is providing ammunition to conservative Republicans who are vowing to shut down the government unless Congress agrees to new anti-immigration measures. They argue that protecting recent Venezuelan migrants from deportation will only encourage more to head north, hoping for similar treatment after they arrive.

Advocates for the policy say Venezuelans and other migrants decide to flee because they fear persecution, starvation and violence, not because of a policy change thousands of miles away in Washington. Mr. Biden singled out Venezuelans for the program because of their sheer numbers — they make up the largest mass migration in the hemisphere in decades.

But the dramatic move by Mr. Biden is evidence of the human dimensions and political power of an issue that has hounded him since he became president. How to deal with the border is at the heart of the funding debate in Congress, and is certain to be central to the debate between Mr. Biden

Continued on Page A20

PRESIDENT TELLS ZELENSKY THE U.S. STANDS WITH KYIV

A PUSH FOR MORE AID

Visiting Leader Warns of Defeat if Lawmakers Curb Support

By ERICA L. GREEN and KATIE ROGERS

WASHINGTON — President Biden told President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine on Thursday that the United States would be "staying with you" as its grinding war with Russia continues, even as a growing faction of the Republican Party has threatened to hold up aid that Mr. Zelensky said could cost his country the war.

Mr. Zelensky's second wartime visit to Washington was spent visiting Capitol Hill, the Pentagon and, finally, the White House, in an extended appeal for more weapons. Along the way, he carried a grim warning. During a meeting at the Capitol with dozens of senators, Mr. Zelensky said Ukraine would lose the war without the aid, according to Senator Chuck Schumer, Democrat of New York and the majority leader.

At the White House, Mr. Biden

DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

President Biden with Volodymyr Zelensky on Thursday.

said the United States would begin shipping over Abrams tanks, which the Ukrainians had long sought and were part of an existing pledge, next week. He also acknowledged that he had little choice but to have faith in a bipartisan breakthrough for continued support for Ukraine.

"I'm counting on the good judgment of the United States Congress," Mr. Biden said. "There's no alternative."

Mr. Zelensky's visit came as polls have shown a growing weariness over the war among the American public, and as dozens of Republicans say they are opposed to Mr. Biden's latest request to Congress for $24 billion for additional aid for Ukraine. Mr. Biden has bucked Republican concerns, pledging that the United States —

Continued on Page A10

Despite Putin Boast, His War Distracts Russia From Friends' Fight

By ANDREW HIGGINS

NEWS ANALYSIS

Endorsing yet another cease-fire in the conflict that embroils two of Moscow's closest partners — Armenia and Azerbaijan — President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia "noted with satisfaction" on Wednesday that the Russian peacekeepers he sent to the region to enforce an earlier, failed truce had helped quell the renewed fighting.

Not mentioned in the Kremlin's account of Mr. Putin's telephone discussion with the leader of Armenia, however, was the fact that Russia's peacekeepers had done nothing to keep the peace in the ethnic Armenian enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh, as Mr. Putin had promised they would three years ago.

In just two days, Azerbaijan's military, through a series of rapid attacks, forced the surrender of the pro-Armenian authorities in the region and shredded a 2020 cease-fire personally brokered by the Russian president.

Drained since by the war in Ukraine, Russia has been less the hegemon that Mr. Putin imagined — an indispensable power capable of knocking heads together until all sides come to their senses — than a distracted spectator of events across its former Soviet dominion.

"Russia only intervened at the very last moment to further its own agenda," said Thomas de Waal, the author of "Black Garden," a definitive book on decades of conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh. Moscow, he added, has not given up its traditional role as arbiter of events in the volatile region south of the Cau-

Continued on Page A10

Murdoch to End Career as Titan In Global Media

By JIM RUTENBERG

Rupert Murdoch is retiring from the Fox and News Corporation boards, the companies announced Thursday morning, making his son Lachlan the sole executive in charge of the powerful global media empire he built from a small local newspaper concern in Australia 70 years ago.

The elder Mr. Murdoch will become chairman emeritus of the two businesses, the companies said.

Mr. Murdoch, 92, had shown no intention of stepping down or even slowing down — including after he named Lachlan the operating heir to his business empire in 2019, when he sold his vast entertainment holdings to the Walt Disney Company.

Though the move places the Murdoch family companies more firmly under Lachlan's control, a bruising succession battle may still loom. Upon Rupert Murdoch's death, his four adult children would have to work out his ultimate successor among themselves, based on a plan he put into place nearly two decades ago.

Mr. Murdoch has made his wishes clear regardless in elevating Lachlan. And, even now, he will continue to offer counsel in his emeritus role, Lachlan said in a company statement. In his own statement to employees, the elder Mr. Murdoch indicated that he would do so actively and regularly.

"We have every reason to be op-

Continued on Page A17

The New Neighbors on the Block: Wall Street

Investors paying all cash have plunged into the single-family home market, outbidding families and turning properties into rentals. Here's what happened in one middle-class subdivision in Charlotte, N.C. Pages A18-19.

Home sales in Bradfield Farms, 2021-2022

● 77 houses bought by large investors, with cash ○ 76 other sales

Sources: ATTOM; Bradfield Farms Homeowners Association; National Agriculture Imagery Program

ELLA KOEZE/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Nearly 99, Carter Savors Life, And Peanut Butter Ice Cream

He Defies Expectations One More Time

By PETER BAKER

Maybe it's the peanut butter ice cream he still enjoys. Or the fact that his first-place Atlanta Braves are cruising toward the playoffs and he wants to see another World Series. Or, as many loved ones and former advisers suggest, maybe he is just too stubborn to follow anyone else's timetable.

Whatever the reason, seven months after entering hospice care, Jimmy Carter is still hanging on, thank you very much, and is in fact heading toward his 99th birthday in just over a week. While nearly everyone, including his family, assumed that the end was imminent when he gave up full-scale medical care last winter, the farmer turned president has once again defied expectations.

"We thought at the beginning of this process that it was going to be in five or so days," Jason Carter, his grandson, said in an interview, recalling the former president's decision to check out of the hospital and go into hospice care at his home in Plains, Ga., last February. "I was down there with him in the hospital and then said goodbye. And then we thought it was going to be in that week that it was coming to the end. And it's just now been seven months."

Mr. Carter was already the longest-living president in Ameri-

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Defense Bill Is Blocked, Again
For the second time, hard-right Republicans defied Speaker Kevin McCarthy on a spending measure. PAGE A15

Michigan's Motor Memory
A strike by U.A.W. members is a reminder of what auto manufacturing still means to the state. PAGE A12

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Trying to Keep Migrants Away
The Biden administration has opened processing centers in Latin America in hopes of persuading people to forgo a harrowing trek to the border. PAGE A4

Giving Care but Earning Scraps
Community health workers, often women, work long hours to help developing countries fight diseases. Yet most are hardly compensated, if at all. PAGE A6

Diplomatic Row Affects Visas
India suspended visa applications for Canadians after the killing of a Sikh Canadian citizen, which Canada has blamed on India's government. PAGE A11

BUSINESS B1-5

FTX Founder Slams Law Firm
Sam Bankman-Fried criticized Sullivan & Cromwell, the firm managing FTX's bankruptcy, for its tangled relationship with the crypto exchange. PAGE B1

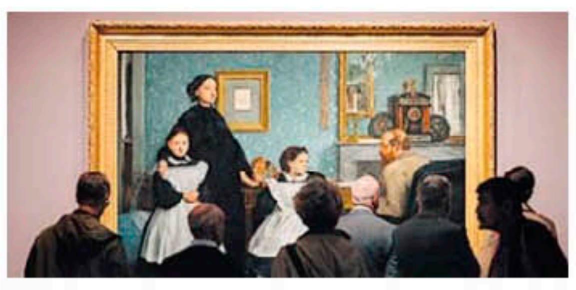
Risks for Tesla and Musk
Elon Musk may be able to exploit his rivals' weaknesses, but the striking auto workers union also has the electric carmaker in its sights. PAGE B1

Are High Rates Here to Stay?
Fed officials are forecasting higher interest rates through 2026, a sign that borrowing costs are not heading back to the rock-bottom levels. PAGE B1

WEEKEND ARTS C1-12

A Striking 'Lunar Eclipse'
In a new play, Reed Birney is terrific as a farmer forced by his wife, played by Karen Allen, to face his grief. PAGE C1

Manet and Degas, Frenemies
Two titans of modern art face off in New York as the Metropolitan Museum explores their relationship. PAGE C1



SPORTS B6-9

Playing for Their Playoff Lives
The Chicago Cubs have so far hung on in the race for the third wild card. Now they just have to keep winning. PAGE B6

Load Up, the N.B.A. Says
The league wants teams to cut back on load management, the practice of sitting out healthy stars. PAGE B8

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Adam Grant PAGE A24

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VISIT…

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Inside The Times

The New York Times

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The Story Behind the Story

Drones, a Text Message and a Trip to Ukraine

A journalist from The Times's Visual Investigations team explains how he learned of a secretive program.

GOVERNMENT OF UKRAINE

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ukraine's prime minister, Denys Shmyhal, top, inspects an aircraft that The New York Times determined was a Bober drone. The Ukrainian government, which released the photo, blurred faces of people in the image. A skyscraper in Moscow, above, was damaged in a reported drone attack in August.

As Ukraine's counteroffensive grinds on, it is increasingly turning to a secret drone program to hit targets deep inside Russian territory. A New York Times visual investigation showed the growth of Ukraine's efforts to strike beyond its borders, using drones that were created with homegrown talent and private fund-raising efforts.

Christiaan Triebert, a journalist on The New York Times's Visual Investigations team, joined "The Daily" podcast to explain how he was tipped off to the program, and why he traveled to Ukraine to follow up on leads. He also discussed how the drone project could shift the dynamics of the war. Here is an edited excerpt from his conversation with the episode's host, Sabrina Tavernise.

So Christiaan, tell me about how you first came to investigate Ukraine's drone program.

So in early May the world was in shock because two drones attacked the Kremlin. It was kind of unthinkable. Of course, the Russian invasion of Ukraine had been going on for over a year, but suddenly, two drones exploding above the Kremlin was like, wow, they're hitting where Putin is, in the heart of Moscow.

And it was surprising because Ukraine doesn't have equipment that does that, right? So it was sort of like, wait, is this someone inside Russia doing this Kremlin attack? Who is this?

That was the big question: Who is responsible for this and how could they pull off an attack like this?

I'm part of a team called Visual Investigations, and basically, what we do is try to find any visual clue that we can find — think of a satellite image, think of a TikTok video, security camera footage, think of official statements, you name it — to piece together what's going on. And we tried to do that with this attack. There was security camera footage of those drones, one exploding and one seemingly hitting one of the domes of the Kremlin.

So we thought, it's grainy footage, but frame by frame, can we measure the wingspan? Can we match it to something that we have seen before? And we couldn't really find a match.

As we're looking into this, I got a text message: Hey Christiaan, long time no speak. Would you like to know more about these drones that hit the Kremlin?

Wait, who is the text message from?

It's a person I've known for a long time but haven't been in contact with for years. Turns out this person who texted me is in this homegrown, do-it-yourself long-range drone program. Basically, a secret weapons program that's building a drone that can hit the Kremlin.

We started chatting, but it's very secretive. And for that reason, people are extremely careful to talk about it. So it seemed the best way for me to better understand it was to go to Ukraine to see some of these drones and to talk in person.

So I went to Ukraine and met my source. And what I started to understand was that this was not one person, or one company, or one government agency building one single drone. It was multiple entities within the government, outside of the government, private companies, that are all racing to build a drone that can hit the Kremlin.

And what did you learn about how Ukraine managed to develop this technology that so few countries have?

So it all started in mid-October last year. That's when Russia started hitting Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities with kamikaze drones that they had bought from Iran.

These are the type of weapons that the U.S. and other Western nations allied with Ukraine are not willing to give to Kyiv, because they're worried that Kyiv will use those weapons sooner or later to indeed strike inside Russia, with whatever the consequences might be.

So Ukraine says, OK, we'll have to build them ourselves. So they got together anyone that had some idea of how to build a drone, and scrambled to build this capacity themselves.

And they start repurposing reconnaissance drones that were not intended to explode or hit a target. Slowly, but surely, it seems they're stepping up their game.

And what are we talking about, Christiaan, in terms of the numbers of these strikes? What does your reporting say?

Well, where we saw just a handful in late 2022, we have seen the amount of attacks double in the past three months alone.

It might be rattling people in Russia, but is it meaningful militarily?

So far, it hasn't killed anyone, but I don't think we should underestimate what the drones have already done and could do in the future. Russia needs to make decisions: Are they going to place their air defense unit in the suburbs of Moscow and move it from Ukraine? These are strategic decisions Russia needs to make, and that could affect the battlefield in Ukraine.

Listen to Christiaan Triebert on "The Daily" at nytimes.com/thedaily.

The Newspaper and Beyond

TODAY'S PAPER

Classified Ads B7
Corrections A22
Crossword C12
Obituaries A23
Opinion A24-25
Weather B10

VIDEO For "A Robust Heart," a short documentary from Times Opinion, the filmmaker Martín Benchimol interviewed slaughterhouse workers. Hear those conversations, which explore family and masculinity, at *nytimes.com/video.*

T LIST This week's roundup of picks from T Magazine included vending machines that sell artwork, an Iraqi painter's haunting night scenes and an East Village omakase restaurant that serves locally sourced fish and rice. *tmagazine.com*

QUIZ A massive manhunt, an auto industry strike, negotiations with Iran: Have you been paying attention to the news? Test your knowledge of current events with The Learning Network's news quiz for students. *nytimes.com/learning*

Quote of the Day

"He's got so much joy in seeing his presidency and post-presidency revisited. In many ways, that keeps him going — along with peanut butter ice cream."

PAIGE ALEXANDER, *the chief executive of the Carter Center, on former President Jimmy Carter, whose 99th birthday is next month. Page A1.*

Today's Top Trending Headlines

U.S. Will Allow Nearly 500,000 Venezuelan Migrants to Work Legally The Biden administration said late Wednesday that it would allow about 472,000 Venezuelans already in the United States to live and work legally in the country for 18 months. The announcement came after pleas from top Democrats in New York, where the recent arrival of more than 110,000 migrants has become a crisis for the city's shelter system, schools and budget.

Rupert Murdoch to Retire From Fox and News Corporation Boards Rupert Murdoch, 92, is retiring from the Fox and News Corporation boards, the companies said on Thursday. The move leaves his son Lachlan, 52, as the sole executive in charge of the global media empire he built starting 70 years ago.

Lying in Comedy Isn't Always Wrong, but Hasan Minhaj Crossed a Line The latest On Comedy column was about Hasan Minhaj, a stand-up comic who uses fabrications to make real-world arguments. Though comedy was never expected to be factually accurate, Minhaj's fictions are risky, wrote the critic Jason Zinoman: "When stories told about racism, religious profiling or transgender identity are exposed as inventions, that can lead to doubt about the experiences of real people."

Opinion | No, I Don't Want to Go for a Walk With You For many, the walking meeting became a necessity during the pandemic, an opportunity to combine connection and fitness with productivity. But for the Opinion columnist Lydia Polgreen, who prefers letting her mind wander on solo walks, the trend is "a new form of social tyranny."

A Headline From History

KHRUSHCHEV BIDS SCHOOLS PREPARE PUPILS FOR LABOR

September 22, 1958. Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev of the Soviet Union announced that the country's school system would be overhauled to teach young people respect for physical labor and to prepare them, from the first grade, "for useful labor and participation in the building of Communist society," The Times reported. In a published discourse, Khrushchev said that, beginning at age 15, young people would be sent to factories, farms or vocational programs for "practical training," with the option to take academic courses at night or by mail. Further, university admissions would be determined by government trade unions and by the Young Communist Leagues. According to Khrushchev's rules, the article said, only young people who had "proved themselves at work" would have the opportunity for further studies.

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Facts of Interest

In August, roughly 91,000 families at the U.S. southern border were arrested after crossing illegally, a monthly record.

A New Tack on Migrant Crisis: Processing Centers in Latin America A4

Jayson Tatum of the Boston Celtics, who played 74 games last season, was the only player on the All-N.B.A. first or second team who played at least 70 games of the league's 82-game season.

N.B.A. Wants Teams to Stop Taking a Load Off B8

Since mid-April, when a war broke out between rival military forces in Sudan, more than 1.5 million people have been internally displaced in the western region of Darfur, according to the U.N. refugee agency.

Left 'Broken Into Pieces,' as Darfur Clashes Force New Generation To Flee A8

Inmates who run the San Quentin Prison Marathon must trace the same tedious loop around a makeshift track more than 100 times to complete the 26.2-mile distance.

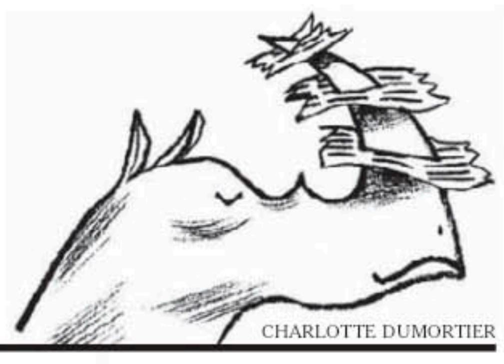
26.2 to Life C11

Federal Reserve officials expect the benchmark short-term interest rate to stay above 5 percent next year, and to end 2025 at nearly 4 percent. That would be roughly double where rates were at the end of 2019.

Fed Officials Expect High Rates Will Last B1

Federal data shows that the numbers of Michigan residents who work in auto manufacturing and parts manufacturing have declined sharply — by some measures, around 50 percent — since 2000.

Identity Crisis for an Automotive Heartland A12



CHARLOTTE DUMORTIER

Reader Corner

Responses and Replies

The California Today newsletter regularly invites readers to share what they love most about the Golden State — beaches, galleries, scenic hikes and more. Here are two recent submissions, which have been edited.

I moved to SoCal less than a year ago. I was surprised by how much California lore lived in my head. So many bucket list items live here! The first thing I thought to do was go surfing. As a 55th birthday present to myself, I took a surfing lesson in Newport Beach in May. It was a class for women, and the instructors were so kind and supportive. I met a bunch of women there and we have been surfing every weekend since. I have a girl gang now. We are surfers. I am a surfer!

— ANN BATENBURG, NEWPORT BEACH

The life of a native Californian is filled with stop-in-your-tracks beauty. My family moved to Shasta County, in the far reaches of Northern California, in the mid-1960s, and I soon became acclimated to stunning vistas, picture-perfect views of Mount Lassen from my bedroom window, and gorgeous Burney Falls, Castle Crags and Whiskeytown Lake. My parents built a home close to the Sacramento River where we raised pet goats, grew a garden, harvested cherries from our backyard orchard and endured 120-degree summers. I live in the city now and love it. Yet, these memories have forever set the standard for my definitions of beauty and joy.

— DONNA THAYER, GOLD RIVER

Just One Question

Times Journalists Share a Key Insight About Their Work

JEENAH MOON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

"Manet/Degas," a show that comes to New York from Paris, opens to the public on Sunday.

For the Weekend Arts section today, Holland Cotter reviewed "Manet/Degas," the Metropolitan Museum of Art's new show on the work of Édouard Manet and Edgar Degas. The exhibit presents two contemporaries in 19th-century France giving shape to modern art. Inside The Times asked Mr. Cotter a question about his work as a critic.

When reviewing an exhibition such as "Manet/Degas," what must you do before you begin to write?

Basically, I regard my job as a critic to be a salaried form of continuing adult education. And because I cover a wide spectrum of art, my approach to covering most museum shows starts with a ton of reading — a catalog if there is one, but also whatever I can pull out of my home library, which is pretty extensive.

Next, of course, is seeing the show. Often this is before it has opened to the public, which means the installation may still be in progress. And depending on how far along that is, and on my copy deadline, I may return for a second or third look. Naturally, curators want to present their projects, which represent years of intensive labor, in a pristine state, but I always reassure them that I so often see shows when stepladders are up and floors are unswept that I don't even notice.

On an initial visit, I prefer to walk through a show on my own, for reasons of concentration — this is, after all, the magical moment, the fresh first look, the one the viewer will have — and ask questions later, which I do. Then it's alone time once the writing starts.

Read Mr. Cotter's review of "Manet/Degas" on Page C1.

The Mini Crossword

■	1	2	3	4
5				
6				
7				
8				

9/22/2023 BY JOEL FAGLIANO

ACROSS

1 Charles, in England
5 Charles, in New England
6 Fill (with)
7 Instrument below a cymbal
8 Goad

DOWN

1 First female G.M. in major league baseball history (for the Miami Marlins)
2 Fluid holder by a hospital bed
3 Brain: Prefix
4 Color of a leprechaun's clothing
5 Opposite of fall

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

■	■	V	A	N
■	G	O	G	H
T	O	W	E	L
O	N	E	S	■
E	E	L	■	■

Here to Help

A Recipe for Broccoli Toasts With Melty Provolone

A beautifully assembled toast can make a lovely light dinner. In this version, blanched broccoli is cooked in olive oil that's been infused with garlic and anchovies (always optional) until it's tender, then it's piled onto toasted bread. Grated provolone is sprinkled on top, then the toasts are broiled until the cheese is melted and golden brown. You can use cauliflower, broccoli rabe or thickly sliced sweet peppers in place of broccoli, but be sure to cook your vegetables until they are velvety soft. While these toasts work well on their own, they make an equally good accompaniment to roast chicken or grilled fish. **COLU HENRY**

TIME: 35 MINUTES
YIELD: 4 TO 6 SERVINGS

- Kosher salt (such as Diamond Crystal) and black pepper
- 1 head of broccoli, about 1 pound, trimmed and cut into small florets
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 4 anchovy fillets, roughly chopped (optional)
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- ½ teaspoon red-pepper flakes
- ½ teaspoon lemon zest
- 6 (¾-inch thick) slices of a 10-inch round peasant loaf
- 3 ounces grated provolone, preferably extra-sharp

1. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil and blanch the broccoli for 2 to 3 minutes. Drain the broccoli and pat dry.

2. Heat the olive oil in a 12-inch tall-sided skillet over medium. Add the anchovies, if using, garlic and red-pepper flakes and cook until the anchovies have dissolved and the garlic is fragrant, 1 to 2 minutes. Add the broccoli and cook, stirring occasionally until the broccoli is cooked down and very tender, about 8 to 10 minutes. Add a tablespoon or two of water, if needed, to help it along. Stir in the lemon zest. Taste and season with salt and pepper, if needed.

ANDREW PURCELL FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES
FOOD SYLIST: BARRETT WASHBURNE

3. While the broccoli cooks, heat the broiler. Lay the bread on a large sheet pan and toast until golden, about 1 to 3 minutes per side depending on your oven. (Check often to make sure they don't burn.) Remove from the oven and divide the broccoli mixture among the toasts. Sprinkle grated provolone on the toast, return them to the oven and broil until the cheese melts and turns golden in spots, 1 to 3 minutes more. (Again, check often to make sure they don't burn.) Remove from the oven and serve slices whole or cut in half.

For more recipes, visit New York Times Cooking at nytcooking.com.

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'We are committed to making sure that everybody gets a shot at this.'

SEAN GARCIA,
deputy refugee coordinator for the U.S. Embassy in Colombia.

Left, Nicaraguan migrants boarding a bus to Guatemala City, where many will continue to the United States despite having no legal means of entry. Right, migrants stopped by the Mexican National Guard yards from the Rio Grande.

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Preparing to cross the Darién Gap from Colombia to Panama. The Biden administration hopes migration processing centers in Latin America will deter people from making the risky journey.

A New Tack on Migrant Crisis: Processing Centers in Latin America

U.S. Hopes to Coax People to Forgo Harrowing Border Treks

By GENEVIEVE GLATSKY and ZOLAN KANNO-YOUNGS

As the Biden administration struggles to tackle a humanitarian and political crisis at America's doorstep, it is focusing increasingly on keeping migrants far from the U.S.-Mexico border by establishing migration processing centers in Central and South America.

But the program is off to a rocky start, with demand for appointments far outstripping supply, leading to periodic shutdowns of the online portal, and some countries' limiting applicants over concerns that the centers will cause migrants to overwhelm their own borders.

The centers, in Colombia, Costa Rica and others planned in Guatemala, have become a primary focus of the president's migration strategy, U.S. officials said, and the administration is already exploring expanding the program to other nations in the region, including opening a similar office in Mexico.

The program, known as the safe mobility initiative, is "the most ambitious plan I've seen," said Sean Garcia, the deputy refugee coordinator for the U.S. Embassy in Colombia, who has worked on migration for over a decade.

But even some officials involved in the initiative acknowledge that it is a modest response to an enormous challenge.

More people — 360,000 through the beginning of the month — have already crossed the Darién Gap this year than in all of last year. And in August, roughly 91,000 families at the U.S. southern border were arrested after crossing illegally, a monthly record.

"The effect on migration through the Darién will be minimal or none at all," Francisco Coy, Colombia's vice minister of foreign affairs, said about the U.S. program. "Let's be frank."

Since it was kicked off in June, the program has put about 3,600 migrants out of roughly 40,000 applicants on a path to be allowed into the United States, according to U.S. officials.

A spokeswoman for the National Security Council, Adrienne Watson, said it would "take time to build up the program to the scale we want to."

"We're ensuring services are being provided in an orderly and efficient manner, while also being able to improve processes," she added.

Alex Díaz, his wife and 4-year-old son were about to board a boat in May to reach the Darién Gap, a brutal stretch of jungle connecting North and South America.

They had spent about $80 on tickets but quickly aborted their plans when they learned of a far safer option to try to make it to the United States: the new Biden administration plan to open offices in several countries, including Colombia, where migrants, like the Díaz family, could apply for entry.

Once online applications opened in June, Mr. Díaz, who is Venezuelan, quickly registered for an interview appointment.

He has heard nothing since.

The program is meant to provide legal entry into the United States for qualified people seeking refugee status, family reunification or another temporary status known as parole. It does not provide asylum, which must usually be sought once inside the U.S. border or at a port of entry.

With migration one of President Biden's most vexing challenges and emerging as a potent issue in next year's election, the administration is essentially offshoring the issue by relying on Central and South American countries to keep migrants from journeying northward.

The Mexican authorities had been intercepting migrants crossing into Mexico from the south and preventing many from traveling to the U.S. border, though in recent weeks the flow of migrants heading north appears to be growing.

Colombia has accepted 2.5 million Venezuelan migrants in recent years and, with the help of U.S. aid, has provided residency permits, though many migrants have abandoned the country because of a lack of economic opportunity.

Following the expiration in the spring of a pandemic-era public health order that allowed the swift deportation of most migrants, the Biden administration introduced rules designed to restrict asylum at the border, while also expanding legal avenues for entry into the United States.

After a notable dip in border encounters, the numbers have started quickly rising. Illegal border crossings have climbed to record levels during Mr. Biden's tenure, part of an immense global movement of people driven by poverty, violence and political instability.

Mr. Díaz, 28, arrived in Colombia from Venezuela in 2017, looking for work to pay for his wedding to his fiancée, Beatriz.

As economic conditions worsened in Venezuela, he decided to stay in Colombia but struggled to gain a foothold in the small border city where he had settled. He worked as a street vendor and was briefly homeless before moving to Bogotá, the capital.

Eventually, Beatriz joined him and they had a son. They both work part time — Mr. Díaz at a printing company, and his wife as a substitute teacher — but are called in only when needed.

They struggle to afford food for their malnourished son, who needs to gain weight before he can get the surgery to remove his tonsils that doctors say he requires.

The couple have long dreamed of starting a business in the United States, and if Mr. Díaz doesn't hear back about an appointment at a migration processing center, he said he would again try to cross the jungle.

The online portal to schedule appointments in Colombia, which opened on June 28, shut down after just one day. The portal was supposed to close after receiving 3,000 applications, a State Department official said, but was flooded with more than 5,000 applications in the first 12 hours. It opened again briefly in August and received another 5,000 applications.

Two offices opened last month in Medellín and Cali, the country's second- and third-largest cities. A third is set to open soon near Bogotá.

A top concern for the United States and other countries during negotiations over the program was that the new offices would attract waves of migrants, according to Colombian and U.S. officials.

To deter mass movements, officials set strict rules. The offices do not accept walk-ins and are limited to certain nationalities. The program in Costa Rica is open to Venezuelans and Nicaraguans who were in the country before June 12, while in Colombia it is reserved for Venezuelans, Haitians and Cubans who were in the country before June 11.

The Guatemalan government initially said it would accept applicants from Nicaragua, Honduras and El Salvador but has since restricted it only to Guatemalans.

"We will not allow any kind of massive or irregular flows or caravans," Mario Búcaro, Guatemala's minister for foreign affairs, said in a video interview distributed to journalists in June. "They are always moved by criminal groups that try to destabilize the sovereignty of the countries."

Some applicants, in addition to complaining about getting no follow-up when they registered for the program, said the requirements were unclear and that applicants in the three major cities where offices have opened, or will be, were contacted before people who had submitted applications earlier.

U.S. officials said they were trying to reduce caseloads in large cities while figuring out how to reach applicants outside of them.

"We are committed to making sure that everybody gets a shot at this," Mr. Garcia said.

While new programs involving multiple governments are bound to experience hiccups, the safe mobility initiative needs to be better managed and be much bigger to be effective, migration experts said.

"They're not providing what could be called an alternative pathway; they're providing an alternative trickle — maybe," said Adam Isacson, director of defense oversight for the Washington Office on Latin America.

Migrants are "going to tell everybody they know that this was a total waste of time" if they don't receive quicker responses from program administrators, he said.

Andreina Cardozi, 33, who left Venezuela five years ago, lives in the mountainous city of Pereira, where her husband works seasonally on a coffee and plantain farm. But when the harvest dries up, so do his paychecks, and they struggle to support their three young children.

She applied for the U.S. migration program the day it opened online, but said she got no response. Friends have crossed the Darién Gap and managed to enter the United States.

She plans to soon follow the same route.

"I would also like to go and see if my life changes," she said. "It does scare me, but in the name of God I'm going to risk it because I have no other possibility."

Genevieve Glatsky reported from Bogotá, Colombia, and Zolan Kanno-Youngs from Washington and Mexico City. Jody García contributed reporting from Guatemala City.

Female Health Workers Tired of Scant Pay Learn Organizing Brings Gains

By STEPHANIE NOLEN and TIKSA NEGERI

PHOTOGRAPHS BY TIKSA NEGERI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Misra Yusuf, left, a community health worker in eastern Ethiopia, tending to a malnourished child.

HARAR, Ethiopia — On a given work day, Misra Yusuf might vaccinate a child against polio, inject a woman with a long-acting contraceptive, screen a man for tuberculosis, hang a bed net to protect a family from malaria and help dig a pit latrine. Over the past few years, she has administered some 10,000 coronavirus vaccines in her community in eastern Ethiopia. She has also spotted and snuffed out a measles outbreak.

She works far more than the 40 hours her contract requires of her each week. For her labor, the Ethiopian government pays her the equivalent of $90 a month.

"The payment is discouraging," she said. "But I keep going because I value the work."

Ms. Yusuf is one in a legion of more than three million community health workers globally and is one of a small minority that are actually paid anything at all. Eighty-six percent of community health workers in Africa are completely unpaid.

But now, spurred by frustrations that arose during the Covid pandemic and connected by digital technologies that have reached even remote areas, community health workers are organizing to fight for fair compensation. The movement stretches across developing countries and echoes the labor actions undertaken by female garment workers in many of those nations 40 years ago.

Ms. Yusuf delivered contraceptive pills to a woman in the community as she went from door to door to provide care.

"Community health workers in some countries like Rwanda and Liberia are treating half of malaria cases, they're doing huge feats of curative care, of promotive care, of preventive care — and yet the vast majority of community health workers around the world are not paid or supported," said Madeleine Ballard, the chief executive of Community Health Impact Coalition, an advocacy group that is helping with organization and strategy. "This is a gender issue, it's a public health issue and it's a labor issue."

The new pressure is starting to produce results. In Kenya, 100,000 female community health workers recently started to receive stipends — $25 a month, paid by the government — as a newly formalized group of health promoters. The win followed a campaign, coordinated on WhatsApp, in which women posted pictures on social media of themselves doing their jobs and used an app to learn strategies for lobbying politicians.

Margaret Odera, who formed the first WhatsApp group, said she relished her successes helping pregnant women in Nairobi, the Kenyan capital, shield their babies from H.I.V. But she was tired of a decade of being told that "only God can thank you" for the work.

"If you can pay a doctor for saving a life, you can pay me," she said.

For more than a billion people in low-income countries, community health workers deliver the main, and sometimes only, health care they receive over their lifetime. Health and aid organizations, such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; and USAID, depend on the workers to carry out programs that often have multimillion-dollar budgets. Yet little or nothing in those budgets may be allotted for so-called last-mile delivery.

Current and former senior staff members at those organizations described meetings in which executives applauded programs that could be put in place by unpaid community health workers, celebrating what they called the "cost effectiveness" it would represent. But in the past year or two, that idea has become less publicly acceptable, the staff members said.

"There is no doubt that women's labor is underpaid and undervalued in the global health work force," Theresa Hwang, deputy director for gender equality at the Gates Foundation, said. "Currently, there isn't enough money in national health systems to ensure women get fairly compensated. As a donor in global health, we're thinking critically about how we can support strengthening those systems and ensure community health workers receive their due."

"It happens in many of the global health programs, they don't budget for what it will cost for somebody to do that work," said Dr. Samukeliso Dube, the executive director of FP2030, an advocacy organization working to expand access to contraceptives globally. Delivery of family planning services relies on community health workers in Ethiopia and many other countries.

In fact, it is often considered a selling point of a program that the delivery can be added to the workload of women who are paid little or nothing, Dr. Dube said. And because the people doing the work are isolated and marginalized women, there is little pushback, she said.

Only 34 of the 193 member states in the United Nations have formalized the role of community health workers with training, accreditation and minimum wages. On Thursday, the U.N. General Assembly, gathering this week in New York, is expected to adopt a declaration on universal health coverage that recognizes the importance of paying community health workers and emphasizes gender equity.

Other prominent international organizations have made such declarations, to little effect. In 2018, the World Health Organization published guidelines for the deployment of community health workers that included a recommendation for fair pay. The World Health Assembly endorsed the idea in 2019.

But, Dr. Ballard said, "pressure is being ratcheted up."

Community health workers typically have limited formal education, and many live in remote rural areas, factors that have made it difficult for them to organize.

"They're not in the same factory every day trading notes," Dr. Ballard said.

The spread of smartphones and free messaging services such as WhatsApp has helped change that.

After women in a role called "lady health worker" in Pakistan won a battle to be paid, their counterparts in Nepal who watched that fight began campaigning for salaries, said Rajendra Acharya, the Asia and Pacific regional secretary of the trade union organization Uni Global, which helped organize the Pakistani workers.

Ms. Yusuf and her colleagues promoting vaccination and contraception options to people in Harar.

Ms. Yusuf, center, is paid $90 per month, about half the salary of her husband, who is a teacher.

"Now volunteer workers in Bangladesh are looking at some gains made in India and saying, 'Why not also here?'" he said.

As news has spread to women about recent victories of their colleagues in other countries, "it's harder for a government to say, 'Oh no we can't afford to pay you' when your neighboring country, with similar circumstances, has brought in a minimum wage for their community health workers," Dr. Ballard said. "Now we're a rising tide."

The Global Fund recently became the first major international health organization to require countries that receive its grants to budget what delivery would be done by community health workers and the funding gap for remunerating them.

The idea of delivering health care through community-based workers with minimal formal training goes back hundreds of years. It was seen as a way to serve people who lived in remote areas where physicians, nurses and midwives were scarce or nonexistent. Many countries model their programs loosely on China's so-called barefoot doctors in the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s.

Health ministries often say they can't afford to pay community health workers, said Dr. Roopa Dhatt, the executive director of a think tank called Women in Global Health. Resistance also comes from religious and political leaders with traditional views about the role of women and who resist paying them for their work.

"Many groups are interested in keeping women in traditional roles in the household, caring roles, whether it's for children, their communities, their families, the elderly," Dr. Dhatt said. "They don't want to count that as work, they want that to be labeled what women like to do or what women are expected to do."

Governments urge women to volunteer for community health roles, promising the positions will bolster their social status, or offering small benefits such as access to a bicycle or a mobile phone. Until recently, the idea of admirable volunteerism kept unions from trying to organize community health workers, Dr. Ballard said.

For all the progress made recently, success is still elusive in many places. In India, more than a million community health workers, all of them women, staged a first-ever strike in 2021. They were frustrated by their pay (about $35 per month) and, especially, a lack of personal protective equipment while they were on the front lines of the response to the Covid pandemic. In these first strikes, they had the backing of the powerful All India Trade Union Congress, but their demand for a guaranteed minimum wage has not yet been met.

Victories can also come with a downside for women: When work conditions and pay improve, men often move into the jobs. Liberia had an almost entirely female network of volunteer health assistants. In 2016, the country began a program of training and paying these workers — and soon more than 80 percent of the new jobs were held by men.

The Liberian government is working to rebalance the work force by setting quotas for the hiring of women. It modified the list of required qualifications so that women's experience in the job is weighed alongside the formal education to which men have more access.

Ms. Yusuf, the community health worker in Ethiopia, has a 10th-grade education but trained for a year before she began her job. Her $90 monthly salary is about half that earned by her husband, a public-school teacher. She would like to transition to a formal nursing career — but she would not be able to pay for the training if she left her current job.

Dozens of studies have found that women who live in rural areas and have limited educational and job opportunities often take community health roles in the hope such work will lead to a paid job, Dr. Ballard said. But such volunteer labor rarely provides that pathway.

Nearly 20 years ago, Ethiopia became one of the first countries in sub-Saharan Africa to make widespread use of what it calls health extension workers. The program quickly produced results: Rates of malaria, AIDS deaths and maternal mortality plummeted. Those women were paid from the outset.

But when it became clear that the two-per-district work force would not be enough to close the primary care gap, Ethiopia opted not to hire more community health workers, instead recruiting an unpaid corps it called the Women's Development Army. This strategy is now being emulated in other countries, such as Nepal and Ghana.

"You're left with this: Either community health workers experience grotesque exploitation, given the number of hours and the complexity of tasks they are undertaking relative to their meager wage, or no wage — or, people are not getting health care," Dr. Ballard said.

Ms. Yusuf said she and her colleagues were seizing every meeting with local officials to complain about their pay.

"Nothing has changed yet," she said. "But it must."

Syria's President Pays a Visit to China To Seek Financial Support and Allyship

By TIFFANY MAY and RAJA ABDULRAHIM

President Bashar al-Assad of Syria arrived in China on Thursday as he sought financial support to rebuild his country and to improve his international standing after being ostracized over atrocities committed during Syria's ongoing civil war.

His visit takes place as China seeks to present itself as a powerful influence in the Middle East, and a partner to nations that are shunned by the United States and the West. He is expected to meet with China's top leader, Xi Jinping.

Background

Mr. al-Assad's trip is his first visit to China in nearly two decades and comes as he has pushed to rehabilitate Syria's global image. China maintained diplomatic ties with Syria even as other nations isolated Mr. al-Assad over his brutal crackdown against the Arab Spring uprising in 2011, which led to civil war.

His government stands accused of atrocities such as using chemical weapons against its own people, torturing thousands of opponents in a network of secret prisons and besieging towns and cities in a conflict that left more than half a million dead.

With the civil war mostly at a stalemate, Mr. al-Assad is looking for investments to help rebuild the country. There has been scant reconstruction of the war-scarred country because of widespread Western sanctions. The United States and many European states have refused to fund any reconstruction in Syria without a political settlement as laid out by a United Nations resolution.

China is unlikely to set political conditions for taking part in reconstruction in Syria. It has buttressed Mr. al-Assad's position alongside Russia since the civil war began, using its veto power in the United Nations as recently as 2020 to block resolutions involving Syria.

With the backing of Russia and Iran, Mr. al-Assad has clawed back control over much of the country, but he now leads a broken and impoverished state facing an economic crisis and renewed protests for his ouster.

In 2022, he announced that Syria would join China's Belt and Road Initiative. He has also lauded China for its role in brokering an agreement between Iran and Saudi Arabia to restore ties in March. In May, Syria was readmitted to the Arab League, though the re-establishment of full diplomatic relations with some countries has stalled.

What Happens Next

Mr. al-Assad landed in Hangzhou and will attend events around the Asian Games, which open on Saturday in the eastern Chinese city.

HUANG ZONGZHI/XINHUA, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bashar al-Assad of Syria is seeking to rebuild his country. Beijing may be able to help, while presenting itself as an influence in the Middle East.

He comes to China with high hopes — if not outsize expectations — of what Beijing might do for his country, analysts said.

"The hope is that China might again use its role as a facilitator to mediate between Syria, Turkey, Iran and Russia to restore Assad's government's control of the country," said Julia Gurol-Haller, a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Freiburg in Germany.

In the long term, China sees the port in Latakia, Syria, as a place of strategic importance in its ambitions to gain a foothold in the Mediterranean Sea, Dr. Gurol-Haller said. But China has been cautious so far, keeping its investments in Syria modest.

Why It Matters

Mr. al-Assad's visit presents an opportunity for Beijing to demonstrate diplomatic strength at a time when China is facing an intensifying rivalry with the United States for geopolitical influence, including in the Middle East.

When the president of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, visited Beijing in June, China offered to mediate between the Israelis and the Palestinians. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel is expected to be presented with a similar offer of mediation when he visits China later this year.

But China's ability to broker deals between embittered nations in the region is limited, because of a lack of experience and knowledge, said Jonathan Fulton, a nonresident senior fellow with the Atlantic Council.

"The bigger part is just to have another country's leader come to town and say, 'We're signing on to these initiatives, and we agree with Beijing's vision of how international politics should work,'" he said.

Left 'Broken Into Pieces' As Darfur Clashes Force New Generation to Flee

By ABDI LATIF DAHIR

RENK, South Sudan — The news he had dreaded arrived a few minutes before midnight.

For weeks, Bahaadin Adam had heard nothing from family members stuck in the fighting that convulsed Nyala, the capital of South Darfur state and the second-largest city in Sudan. Mr. Adam, who had fled weeks before to neighboring South Sudan, remained jittery, constantly checking his phone for updates.

Finally, as he was getting ready for bed, he received a message from his brother. Most of the family had managed to escape Nyala, but his two younger sisters — Meethaaq, 24, and Hana, 10 — had been killed by artillery fire.

"I was broken into pieces," Mr. Adam, 28, said in a recent interview in Renk town in South Sudan.

Five months after a devastating war began in Sudan between rival military forces, the western region of Darfur has quickly become one of the hardest hit in the nation. People in Darfur have already suffered genocidal violence over the past two decades that has left as many as 300,000 people dead.

Now Darfur, which had been edging toward relative stability, is being torn apart by a nationwide war between the Sudanese Army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces. The Rapid Support Forces and its allies, predominantly Arab militias, have assumed control of large parts of Darfur, while the regular army mostly operates from garrisons in major cities, residents and observers said.

As the two sides battle for supremacy, civilians have increasingly been caught in the crossfire, particularly in recent weeks. More than 40 people were killed late last month as they took cover under a bridge in Nyala, and at least 40 died in air raids in the city this month, activists and medical workers said. The discovery of mass graves, including more than a dozen last week by the United Nations, has raised fears of a resurgence of ethnically motivated attacks in Darfur — and pushed the International Criminal Court to begin a new inquiry into accusations of war crimes and crimes against humanity in the region.

Frantic and sometimes competing diplomatic efforts to end the conflict — by the United Nations, African countries, Saudi Arabia and the United States — have gone nowhere.

Last week, the U.N. special envoy to Sudan, Volker Perthes, resigned months after Sudanese officials declared him unwelcome in the country. In his farewell speech to the U.N. Security Council, Mr. Perthes warned that the conflict "could be morphing into a full-scale civil war."

Speaking to the United Nations General Assembly in New York on Thursday, the head of the army, Gen. Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, accused the paramilitary forces of committing "acts that amount to war crimes" and called on the international community to designate the paramilitary forces as a terrorist group.

His foe, the paramilitary chief, Lt. Gen. Mohamed Hamdan, posted his own address to the U.N. on Thursday on X, the social media platform formerly known as Twitter, in which he accused the army of starting the war and called General al-Burhan a "warmonger" with no right to speak for Sudan.

In Sudan in recent days, more residents are fleeing their homes, food prices are skyrocketing and millions of people are now on the verge of famine. More than 1.5 million people have been internally displaced in Darfur since mid-April, according to the U.N. refugee agency, the highest of any region in Sudan. Hundreds of thousands more civilians from the region have streamed into transit centers and refugee camps in neighboring nations.

Eight lawyers and at least 10 human rights advocates have been killed in Darfur in recent weeks, raising fears they were being targeted for documenting human rights violations or providing legal support to victims, according to Elsadig Ali Hassan, the acting president of the board of the Darfur Bar Association.

In interviews, residents from South Darfur who made it to safety in South Sudan described a rapid increase in robberies and plunder by armed militias allied with the paramilitary forces. With supplies of food and water dwindling, many packed up their meager belongings and left, hungry and weak, for the border.

Ahmed Abubakar at a camp in Aweil. "I had ambitions for myself," he said. "But I cannot see any light at the end of the tunnel."

Bahaadin Adam at a camp in Renk. Most of his family escaped, but two sisters, ages 24 and 10, had been killed by artillery fire.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOAO SILVA/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Refugees at a camp last month in Renk, South Sudan. Those who fled the fighting in South Darfur told of a rise in robberies and killings by militias allied with the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces.

As the number of injuries escalated, medical workers, exhausted, hungry and lacking critical supplies, watched as their patients died or their wounds festered for lack of treatment. Families, afraid of incoming fire, quickly buried their loved ones in shallow or unmarked graves.

"Another generation from Darfur is learning to live with war and atrocities," said Maha Mohamed, a Sudanese refugee from Nyala who was at the transit center in Renk. "It's a tragedy."

The continued hostilities in Darfur risk plunging the country into a prolonged war, observers say. In recent weeks, the head of the army, General al-Burhan, has traveled abroad and met with leaders of nations including Egypt, Qatar, Turkey and South Sudan in an effort to build his legitimacy and dismiss the Rapid Security Forces as a rebel group.

The paramilitary chief, General Hamdan, has fired back, accusing General al-Burhan of trying to "impersonate the head of state" and planning to establish a "war government" in the coastal city of Port Sudan.

His comments came as the violence intensified in the locked-down Sudanese capital, where an airstrike last week killed at least 43 people and wounded more than 60, doctors and aid workers said.

"It is all just unbearable," said Mamadou Dian Balde, the regional director for the U.N. refugee agency, who recently traveled across parts of Sudan.

Some of those fleeing the conflict in the states of South and East Darfur are being relocated to aid camps in South Sudan, a nation encumbered by its own political, economic and social challenges.

One of those camps, the Wedwil refugee settlement in Aweil town, is home to almost 9,000 Sudanese. Every evening, families there huddle in groups, share sweet tea and coffee, pray together and listen to Sudanese music. Many of them were professionals and successful traders, all now united by a grinding war that has ripped apart everything they worked so hard to build.

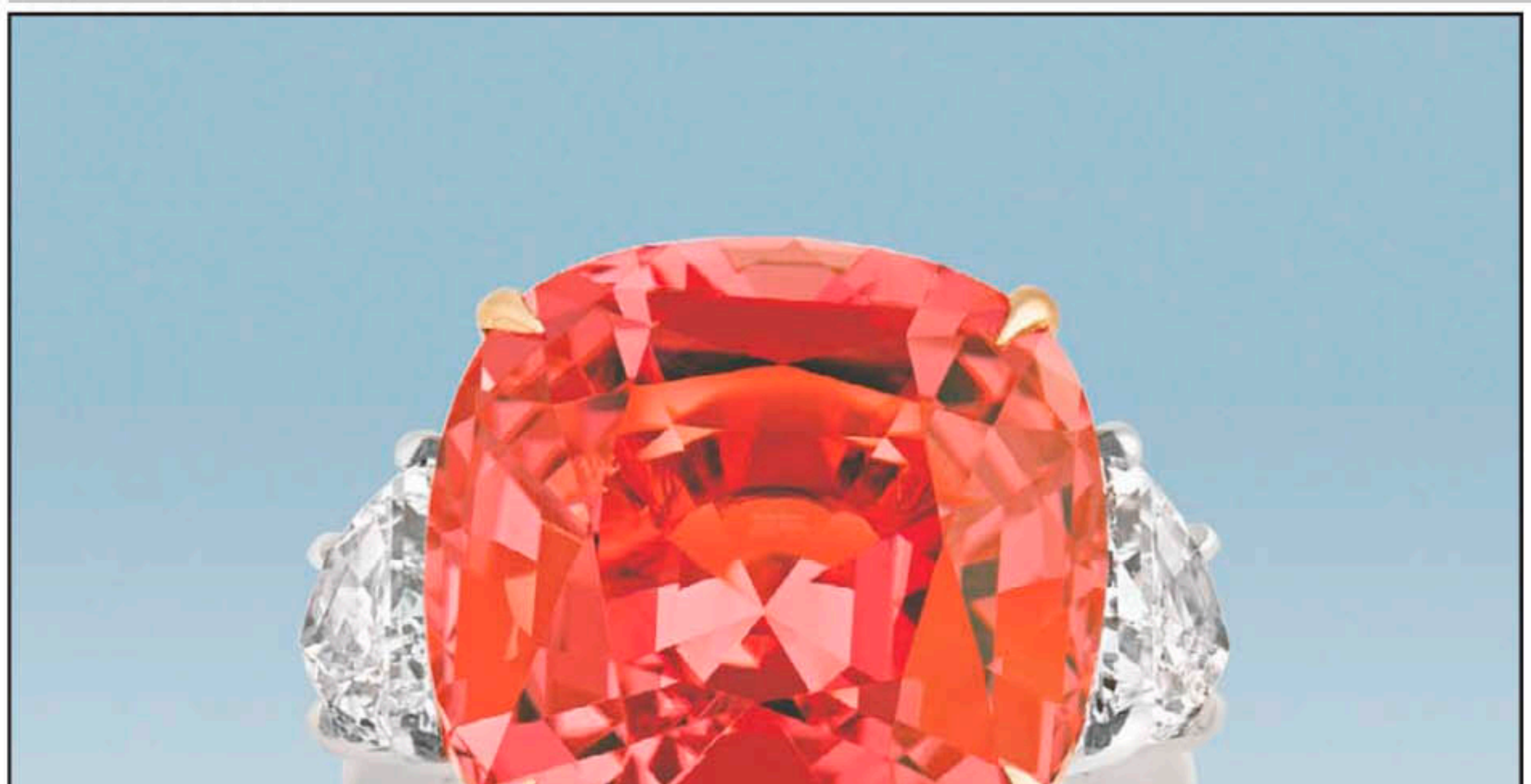
"The fire of war has enveloped everything in Darfur," said Ahmed Abubakar, 35, a teacher, who fled Nyala in South Darfur.

Mr. Abubakar said members of the paramilitary forces raided his home, accused him of being an army officer and threatened to shoot him in front of his wife and three children. But he beseeched them not to, he said, telling them about his job teaching geography and history and his wife's work as a nursery school teacher. After more than an hour, the armed men agreed to let them go, he said, but not before they took almost everything of value in the house.

The memories of that day and the family's harrowing journey to safety continue to haunt the children, Mr. Abubakar said. His daughter Minan, 3, clings to him everywhere he goes. His son, Mustafa, 5, constantly asks when he can go back to school. "I had ambitions for myself and my children," he said. "But I cannot see any light at the end of the tunnel."

Mr. Adam, who lost both his sisters, shared the same feelings of loss and hopelessness. Before the war broke out on April 15, he was looking forward to marking the end of the holy month of Ramadan, celebrating his sister's graduation from college and, days later, attending her engagement party. But his sister was gone now, and the entire family was scattered between two countries with limited communications.

"We were once a happy family," he said on a recent afternoon. "But this war has made everything difficult and everyone sad."



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After Floods, Libya Appears to Target Critics

By VIVIAN YEE

CAIRO — The authorities in flood-devastated eastern Libya appeared to be moving to muzzle dissent over the past week, arresting protesters and activists who have demanded accountability for what they say was a botched official response to the catastrophe.

Torrential rains that burst two dams unleashed a flood on Sept. 11 that swept much of the coastal city of Derna and the surrounding areas out to the Mediterranean Sea, killing thousands.

At least three people who either publicly criticized the government response or participated in a protest in Derna on Monday have been detained, according to witnesses and a relative. Aid workers and journalists say the authoritarian administration that controls the eastern half of divided Libya, which includes Derna, restricted access to the city for some.

On Tuesday and Wednesday, internet and cellphone services in the city were shut down, raising questions about whether operators deliberately severed them.

"The level of anger among people is very high, and communications have been cut off because they're afraid of people expressing their anger publicly," said Islam Azouz, a volunteer aid worker from Derna who attended the protest on Monday, where hundreds of people demanded that those responsible for the catastrophe be held to account.

"People lost their homes and their city. Of course they're angry over the corruption and neglect that led to this disaster," he added.

Officials in eastern Libya, however, said that damage or sabotage was to blame for the internet outages.

After Monday's protest, some reporters for Arabic-language broadcast channels viewed widely across the Middle East said they were ordered out of Derna, while other journalists covering the rescue and relief operations said they were prevented from moving freely around the city or from re-entering it once they had left.

Foreign rescue teams and other aid groups appeared to be operating as usual. But Mr. Azouz said on Wednesday that some civilian volunteer groups from the other side of Libya's east-west divide had been told to leave.

Two rival governments split control over the chaos-wracked country in the years after its 2011 Arab Spring revolt and the civil war that grew out of it.

A United Nations aid convoy traveling from Benghazi, the de facto capital of eastern Libya, was also turned away by the authorities in Derna on Wednesday without explanation, said Georgette Gagnon, the humanitarian coordinator in Libya for the U.N.'s aid coordination agency. However, other U.N. aid work in Derna continued unimpeded, she added.

"There hasn't been an overall effort at all to restrict U.N. movements or restrict getting in humanitarian supplies," she said.

The widespread confusion over access to Derna owed much to the disordered, divided and highly politicized state of Libyan institutions and media. Reliable information about the death toll and other basics was hard to come by even before the communications outage.

Signs of a crackdown against those seeking accountability.

The World Health Organization said on Wednesday that about 4,000 deaths had been registered in hospitals. But eastern administration officials have said the death toll is far higher. Some have estimated that as many as 11,000 people died, with thousands more missing.

Mohamed Eljarh, a former Libya analyst and consultant who began work on Tuesday as the official spokesman for the Benghazi-based eastern government's emergency response committee, said on Wednesday that the authorities were attempting to streamline the chaotic relief efforts as aid-related traffic clogged the roads and crowded what was left of Derna.

But officials in the east still lacked clear protocols for authorizing entrance to Derna, he added, saying he did not know why the U.N. convoy had been blocked.

The eastern administration long controlled by the military strongman Khalifa Hifter and his self-styled Libyan National Army, frequently justifies its actions by saying it is rooting out Islamist extremists. This time is little different.

Mr. Eljarh said the eastern authorities were concerned that anti-Hifter elements were infiltrating the aid effort to incite violence and inflame local grievances against the territory's leaders, and that Islamist media outlets were politicizing the tragedy by broadcasting unfounded criticisms of Mr. Hifter.

But for residents furious about all they had lost in the floods, it seemed the Benghazi-based authorities were returning to the same repressive security tactics they often use to quell perceived threats to their power.

Hundreds of Derna residents gathered at a city mosque on Monday evening to protest the government's response to the storm, calling for an international investigation into those responsible for maintaining the dams that had burst and for the removal of the speaker of Libya's eastern-based Parliament, which is part of the territory's administration.

They burned down the home of Derna's mayor, a nephew of the speaker who was appointed by the Benghazi government, and circulated a list of demands. The speaker, Aguila Saleh, is another powerful eastern politician who generally aligns with Mr. Hifter.

Shortly after the demonstration, all communications in Derna were out, leaving residents, aid workers and others with no way to call, message or use mobile internet from early Tuesday morning through Wednesday night, when people there said internet had been restored.

Libya's state-owned telecommunications company told local news outlets after communications were cut that the outage was caused either by damage to fiber-optic cables that may have occurred during the ongoing recovery operations or by sabotage.

By Tuesday night, the eastern government committee coordinating the emergency response announced that the damage was 70 percent repaired. That stood in contrast to the repair efforts immediately after the floods, when some communications were restored within just a few hours.

Two telecommunication executives working in Libya who had been briefed on the situation said that internet was restored after the network was turned on again and that no technical failures had been reported anywhere in the network, meaning that it had been shut off intentionally.

That would fit a pattern for the Benghazi authorities, who have ordered communications in another restive city, Surt, to be severed three times in the past four months for security reasons, said the executive, who asked not to be identified for fear of official retaliation.

Hwaida Saad contributed reporting.

War in Ukraine

NEWS ANALYSIS

Despite Putin's Boast, His War Distracts Russia From Azerbaijan

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casus Mountains but is "reviewing its options" in light of its weakened position, "betting more on Azerbaijan" than Armenia for the future.

Incensed by Moscow's inaction, protesters gathered outside the Russian Embassy in Yerevan, the Armenian capital, denouncing Russia as an "evil empire" and, in a few cases, burning Russian passports. In Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, residents celebrated their country's victory by waving Russian flags, as well as those of Turkey, a vital source of diplomatic support and weapons for Azerbaijan.

Preventing this week's eruption of violence in an intractable dispute — which tormented Mikhail Gorbachev, the last Soviet leader, in the late 1980s and outlasted seven American presidents — was never going to be easy.

But Russia's inability or perhaps unwillingness to even try until the very last moment sent a clear signal, analysts said: Moscow, overstretched in Ukraine, no longer has the military or diplomatic oomph to support its long cherished role as the center around which war and peace revolve in the "near abroad," as the lands of the former Soviet empire are called in Russia.

Because of the debacle in Ukraine, said Aleksandr Atasuntsev, an independent Russian journalist and expert on the Caucasus region, "Russia doesn't have the resources to make everyone scared of it as it could before."

"Russia has one big goal," he continued. "It wants to win in Ukraine and is ready to sacrifice a lot to achieve this, including allies."

This was already apparent last year when Russia largely sat on its hands when a brief border war erupted in Central Asia between Tajikistan and neighboring Kyrgyzstan, both former Soviet republics and also members of Russia's military alliance, the Collective Security Treaty Organization.

Six months later, shortly after Russian forces suffered a humiliating rout in Ukraine's Kharkiv Region, Azerbaijan took advantage of Russia's disarray to attack territory inside Armenia's borders, confident that Russia would not respond.

But while falling down this week on its pledges to keep the peace around Nagorno-Karabakh, Russia kept faith with its own interests. It tilted away from Armenia, also a member of the military alliance, which promises collective security, toward Azerbaijan, which is not a member of the alliance but is much richer and militarily stronger than Armenia. Azerbaijan offers a bigger market for Russian goods, particularly weapons, and sits astride roads and railway lines vital for Russia's trade with Iran and Turkey.

While the war in Ukraine has strained Russia, it has enriched and emboldened Azerbaijan, enhancing its role as a key alternative to Russia for supplies of gas and energy. Holding their nose at its dictatorial leadership, European countries have been courting Azerbaijan with zeal for its energy.

Russia is not pulling out of the South Caucasus and its troops will stay on, avoiding a sudden contraction of Moscow's military footprint. But their task now will be protecting a likely wave of civilians fleeing Nagorno-Karabakh and discouraging interethnic revenge killings.

The continued presence of Russian troops, given their previous inaction, won't allow Moscow to determine what happens on the ground but does send a signal to the United States, which has only diplomats in the region, to back off from its recent efforts to get more involved.

IRAKLI GEDENIDZE/REUTERS

The Armenian, right, and Azerbaijani border guard posts on the road leading from Armenia to the Nagorno-Karabakh region. Russia was to keep the road open.

THE NEW YORK TIMES

ROMAN ISMAYILOV/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK

Representatives of the ethnic Armenian residents of Nagorno-Karabakh, foreground, during "reintegration" negotiations with Azerbaijani officials on Thursday in Yevlakh, Azerbaijan.

Russia has been infuriated by what it sees as a push by Washington to take advantage of the war in Ukraine and lure once-close allies like Armenia out of its orbit.

"They are trying to artificially oust Russia from the South Caucasus, using Yerevan as a means of achieving this goal," the Russian state news agency Tass said earlier this month, quoting an unnamed foreign ministry official.

"Armenia should not become a tool of the West to squeeze out Russia," the official warned.

In many ways, though, Russia has squeezed itself out.

For months, its peacekeepers stood aside as Azerbaijan sent youth "volunteers" and then soldiers to block traffic on a strategic road that Russia was meant to keep open between Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, a territory inside Azerbaijan's internationally recognized borders but inhabited by ethnic Armenians.

When the Azerbaijani military set up a checkpoint in April on the road, known as the Lachin Corridor, Russian peacekeepers simply looked on as a large Azerbaijani flag was unfurled. Azerbaijan said its new "control mechanism" on the road was being "implemented in coordination" with Russian troops.

From the moment Russia ceded control of the road to Azerbaijan, say experts on the region, it was clear that Russia had neither the will nor the resources to preserve the 2020 settlement brokered by Mr. Putin.

"This was the moment when the Karabakh Armenians were doomed," said Mr. De Waal, the author. "They were sealed off by Azerbaijan. The Russian peacekeeping force was clearly weakened. It probably lost some of its best people to Ukraine."

Shortly before the recent fighting, Armenia's prime minister, Nikol Pashinyan, told Italy's La Repubblica newspaper that the war in Ukraine meant that his country, in which Russia has a military base, had made a big mistake in counting almost entirely on Moscow for its security.

"Armenia's security architecture 99.999 percent was linked to Russia," including arms and ammunition, Mr. Pashinyan said, "but today we see that Russia itself is in need of weapons, arms and ammunition." Even if Russia wanted to help, he added, "it cannot meet Armenia's security needs."

President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan has also voiced veiled disdain for the Russian military's performance, complaining in a television interview early this year that land mines had somehow found their way from Armenia to Nagorno-Karabakh, past Russian soldiers guarding the corridor. "How did Armenian-made mines produced in 2021 even get there?" he asked. "The Russian peacekeeping force cannot answer this question."

When Armenia and Azerbaijan ended their first war over Nagorno-Karabakh in 1994, the economies of the two countries were roughly the same size. Azerbaijan's, turbocharged since by earnings from oil and gas, is now nearly 10 times bigger. Both countries buy most of their weapons from Russia, but according to a report by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Azerbaijan spent $2.2 billion on weapons in 2020 compared with $634 million for Armenia.

The war in Ukraine has widened the economic gap further and also boosted Azerbaijan's diplomatic position. It created a "new world," Mr. Aliyev told state television earlier this year, boasting that since Russia's started its full-scale invasion, foreign demand for Azerbaijani natural gas had dramatically increased.

By tilting away from Armenia, Russia also wins points with Azerbaijan's most stalwart ally, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey, a NATO member but one that has frequently worked at cross purposes with the West over Ukraine.

With anger building in Armenia against Mr. Pashinyan, who distanced his government from this week's conflict, Russia could secure one of its longstanding goals — replacing the Armenian leader, whom Moscow has never trusted because he came to power through street protests and presides over a democracy. Far more comforting is Mr. Aliyev, who inherited his position from his father, a former president who served as a senior K.G.B. official in the Soviet Union.

Russia's distrust of Armenia increased sharply early this month when Mr. Pashinyan's wife, Anna Hakobyan, traveled to Kyiv and met with the Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelensky. Mr. Pashinyan also enraged Moscow by pushing Armenia's Parliament to ratify the Rome Statute, which would make Mr. Putin, should he visit Armenia, liable to arrest on suspicion of war crimes under a warrant issued in March by the International Criminal Court.

"Russia always calculated that it was a mighty big power that everyone was too frightened to challenge," said Mr. Atasuntsev, the Russian journalist. "But after Ukraine, it no longer plays a restraining role."

Biden Reassures Zelensky the U.S. Is 'Staying With You' as Calls Grow to Curb Aid

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by far the largest military funder of Ukraine among its Western allies — will stay with Kyiv for the long haul.

Congress has already approved $113 billion in military, economic, humanitarian and other aid for Ukraine, including around $70 billion for security, intelligence and other war fighting costs. Mr. Biden on Thursday released a new military package, worth some $325 million, from the existing funding, including what officials called significant air-defense capabilities.

Mr. Zelensky had been hoping that the Americans would provide a powerful weapon called the Army Tactical Missile System, known as ATACMS, which can strike targets 190 miles away with a warhead containing about 375 pounds of explosives.

Jake Sullivan, the national security adviser, told reporters that Mr. Biden would not provide ATACMS now, but he has not taken it off the table for the future.

To keep ammunition flowing for Ukraine's offensive operations, the Pentagon will also send more guided artillery rockets and artillery shells.

The weaponry offered no new capabilities that have not already been supplied to Kyiv, but leaned heavily on providing more ammunition for air-defense and artillery attacks that are in high demand on the battlefield.

Mr. Zelensky said the package is "exactly what our soldiers need now."

Mr. Biden said the new military aid package showed the United States' commitment to help Ukraine in the long-term.

"We're with you," Mr. Biden said, "and we're staying with you."

Washington has changed in the nine months since Mr. Zelensky was last here to deliver a joint address to Congress. At the time, Vice President Kamala Harris and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi brandished a Ukrainian flag signed by soldiers on the front line. Mr. Biden, who harbored serious doubts about Mr. Zelensky's longevity as a leader at the outset of the invasion, had started to greet the Ukrainian leader like an old friend during regular phone calls. Mr. Biden secretly visited Kyiv in February.

These days, Republicans control the House, which has descended into chaos recently as lawmakers seem unwilling to agree on passing spending legislation that would avert a government shutdown. And insurgent members are threatening to relieve Speaker Kevin McCarthy, Republican of California, of his gavel.

In a show of bipartisan comity, Mr. Zelensky, dressed in dark-olive fatigues, was escorted through the Capitol during his visit by Mr. Schumer and Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, the Republican leader.

"American support for Ukraine is not charity," Mr. McConnell, the minority leader, said in a statement. "It's in our own direct interests — not least because degrading Russia helps to deter China."

Mr. McCarthy, who is under pressure to take a hard line amid demands in his caucus for spending cuts, had a private meeting with Mr. Zelensky on Thursday, and both men were cordial. But he has also publicly questioned supporting the war.

"Where is the accountability on the money we already spent?" Mr. McCarthy asked reporters this week. "What is the plan for victory? I think that's what the American public wants to know."

In a smaller, closed-door meeting on Thursday, Republican lawmakers asked Mr. Zelensky to address their concerns and provide them with his vision of a plan for victory. And Democrats asked him how they could convince their conservative colleagues that continuing to support the war was the right answer.

Senator John Cornyn, Republican of Texas, said Mr. Zelensky had listened to questions about "funding fatigue," and then talked about the "consequences of us cutting off the money."

He said Mr. Zelensky had stressed that Europe and other countries look to the United States for leadership, and a decision by Washington to curtail aid could undercut Europe's commitment.

Later, Mr. Zelensky brought his wife, Olena, to the meeting at the White House.

The Zelenskys have tried to build personal relationships with the president and Jill Biden, the first lady. Olena Zelenska has spent much of her time in hiding since the beginning of the war, but she has written letters to Dr. Biden, and the two of them met last year in Ukraine when the first lady took a secret trip to the country.

"It's good that our countries are really truly allies," Mr. Zelensky said, reading from a set of cards as he sat next to the president. "I am in Washington to strengthen Ukraine's position to defend our children, our families, our homes, freedom and democracy in the world."

Mr. Zelensky also recounted his "frank, constructive dialogue" earlier today with members of Congress from both parties. He posted a picture of himself with the House leaders, and emphasized that Ukraine is "sincerely grateful to the House, both parties, and the entire American people for all the support."

Karoun Demirjian, James C. McKinley Jr. and John Ismay contributed reporting.

India Suspending Visas For Canadian Nationals After Killing of Sikh Man

By SUHASINI RAJ and YAN ZHUANG

India has suspended visa applications by Canadian nationals, a sharp escalation in the diplomatic conflict that has followed Canada's claim that Indian agents were behind the June killing of a Sikh Canadian citizen, Hardeep Singh Nijjar, on Canadian soil.

Arindam Bagchi, the Indian foreign ministry spokesman, described the move as a technical and security issue, saying on Thursday that the country's high commission and consulates in Canada were "temporarily unable" to process visas because of safety threats.

"This has disrupted their normal function," Mr. Bagchi said during a regularly scheduled news briefing, adding, "We will be reviewing the situation on a regular basis."

Tensions between India and Canada have soared in the days since Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said in Parliament that Canada's intelligence services had information linking the Indian government to the killing of a Sikh separatist in British Columbia on June 18.

The Indian government on Tuesday forcefully rejected the claim that it had been involved in the death of Mr. Nijjar and accused Canada of harboring terrorists who are seeking to carve a Sikh homeland out of India's territory.

India then moved to expel a high-ranking Canadian diplomat from New Delhi. Canada had expelled an Indian diplomat — described as the head of New Delhi's intelligence agency in Canada — the day before.

On Thursday, Mr. Bagchi signaled that more Canadian diplomats could soon leave India, in what he called a step to ensure "parity" between the two countries' diplomatic presences.

"Their numbers here are very much higher than ours in Canada," he said. "The details of this are being worked out, but I assume there will be a reduction from the Canadian side."

Canadians have voiced outrage at the possibility that the Indian government played a role in the killing of a Canadian citizen on Canadian soil. In July, protesters outside the Indian Consulate General in Toronto promoted the Sikh secessionist cause with signs that accused Indian diplomats of being behind Mr. Nijjar's death.

On Wednesday, the Indian foreign ministry pointed to what it called threats to the safety of its citizens and diplomats. It advised Indian citizens living in or traveling to Canada to "exercise utmost caution" because of what it described as an increase in "anti-India activities and politically condoned hate crimes and criminal violence in Canada."

"Recently, threats have particularly targeted Indian diplomats and sections of the Indian community who oppose the anti-India agenda," the advisory said, adding that Indian nationals should avoid traveling to regions and sites in Canada that had seen such incidents.

RAJAT GUPTA/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK

Indian police officers secured the area around the Canadian Embassy in New Delhi on Tuesday.

Dominic LeBlanc, Canada's minister of public safety, dismissed India's travel warning in remarks to reporters in Ottawa.

"People can read into that what they want," he said. "Canada is a safe country. What we're doing is ensuring there's an appropriate criminal investigation into these circumstances."

Canada said on Wednesday that its own diplomats had received threats on social media, announcing that it was pulling some of them out of India to ensure their safety.

The Canadian government has yet to release any details about its intelligence findings in Mr. Nijjar's death, saying that doing so could damage the police investigation and reveal the country's intelligence-gathering methods. Canada has asked for India's assistance in the inquiry.

"We are not looking to provoke or escalate," Mr. Trudeau told reporters on Tuesday. "We are simply laying out the facts as we understand them, and we want to work with the government of India."

Relations between India and Canada have plunged this week to what officials and analysts call the lowest point in history after years of simmering tension.

Tensions between two countries escalate as one of them sees a secessionist threat.

The Indian government has long accused Canada and other Western nations of inaction as extremist Sikh groups in the Indian diaspora — including the one led by Mr. Nijjar — have supported a secessionist movement that threatens India's sovereignty.

Canada has said that it respects the right of all of its citizens to freedom of speech in advocating political causes. Indian officials say that Canadian politicians are reluctant to curb Sikh extremism because of the lobbying sway of the group, the largest population of Sikhs outside India.

Officials in India have accused Canada, Britain, the United States and Australia of standing by as those pushing for what is known as Khalistan, the independent nation that Sikh secessionists want to establish in the Punjab region of India, have vandalized Indian diplomatic missions and threatened Indian diplomats.

Mr. Bagchi, the Indian foreign ministry spokesman, said on Thursday that all categories of visas, including e-visas, would be halted and that Canadians would be unable to apply for a visa through a third country.

The Indian government had been forced to suspend visas, he said, because of "incitement to violence, the inaction by Canadian authorities and the creation of an environment that disrupts the function of our high commission and consulates."

Contractor Said to Steal Satellite Imagery of Africa

By ADAM GOLDMAN

WASHINGTON — A State Department contractor stole classified documents that included satellite imagery and other sensitive information about military activities in Africa, federal prosecutors said in a criminal complaint unsealed on Thursday.

Abraham T. Lemma, 50, a naturalized U.S. citizen of Ethiopian descent from Silver Spring, Md., was charged with two counts of espionage and willful retention of national defense information. The espionage charges carry a potential death sentence and up to life in prison, the Justice Department said in a news release.

The case comes after several leaks from within the American government raised questions about security and employees' level of access. In April, prosecutors arrested a Massachusetts Air National Guardsman accused of sharing a vast array of national security secrets to an online gaming chat group. Last month, two Navy sailors in California were charged with giving military secrets to Chinese intelligence officers.

The court documents provide new details about the documents Mr. Lemma is believed to have taken from a secure facility at the State Department. The New York Times revealed this month that he

Naturalized citizen of Ethiopian descent is charged with spying.

had been arrested in August and charged with spying for Ethiopia, a country that is a significant recipient of aid from the United States, but little else was known.

While the complaint does not disclose what country Mr. Lemma was working for, U.S. officials identified it as Ethiopia and described the suspected spying as narrow in focus. In a statement, the State Department said it would work with intelligence agencies and conduct a review of the national security and foreign policy implications of the case.

According to a court filing, Mr. Lemma had been employed by the State Department since at least 2021, working during the evenings at a secure facility in Washington. Around May 2022, he began working during the days as an analyst at the Justice Department, where he had access to classified information.

At the State Department, Mr. Lemma served as an information technology administrator in its intelligence arm, the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, known as I.N.R., and had access to classified systems, the filing said. The intelligence arm handles some of the most sensitive American intelligence, which is used to better inform ambassadors and other senior diplomats.

While some of the intelligence the bureau would have gathered would include less sensitive economic data, it would also include up-to-the minute assessments of a war in Ethiopia involving its neighbor Eritrea, information the Ethiopian government would have a keen interest in understanding.

In his role at the State Department, Mr. Lemma was authorized to move highly sensitive material among classified systems and could send classified information to unclassified systems. Some of the documents he is accused of taking were marked secret or top secret, prosecutors say.

From December 2022 to August 2023, Mr. Lemma copied information from dozens of intelligence reports on an array of topics, according to the court filing. In some instances, he would delete the classification markings and paste the contents into Word documents. A majority of reports appear to be related to Ethiopia, where Mr. Lemma has family.

Mr. Lemma is accused of taking more than 100 documents containing classified information since returning in July 2022 from a trip to Africa. Investigators said he made a second trip in mid-April.

Mr. Lemma had been repeatedly observed retrieving classified material without authorized access and taking handwritten notes, the filing added. He sent classified documents, photographs, notes, maps and details about other countries neighboring Ethiopia using an encrypted platform with his overseas handler, prosecutors said.

In September 2022, Mr. Lemma shared information about another country's activities in East Africa, investigators said.

Ethiopia, situated on the geopolitically important Horn of Africa, is one of the poorest countries in the world, facing drought, famine, political unrest and a bloody civil war. In recent years, the United States has provided the country more than $3 billion in aid, according to the State Department. Earlier this year, Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken visited Ethiopia to bolster ties with the United States amid the rising influence of China and Russia.

Poor spy tradecraft appears to have played a part in helping the F.B.I. confirm that Mr. Lemma was in contact with a foreign intelligence official.

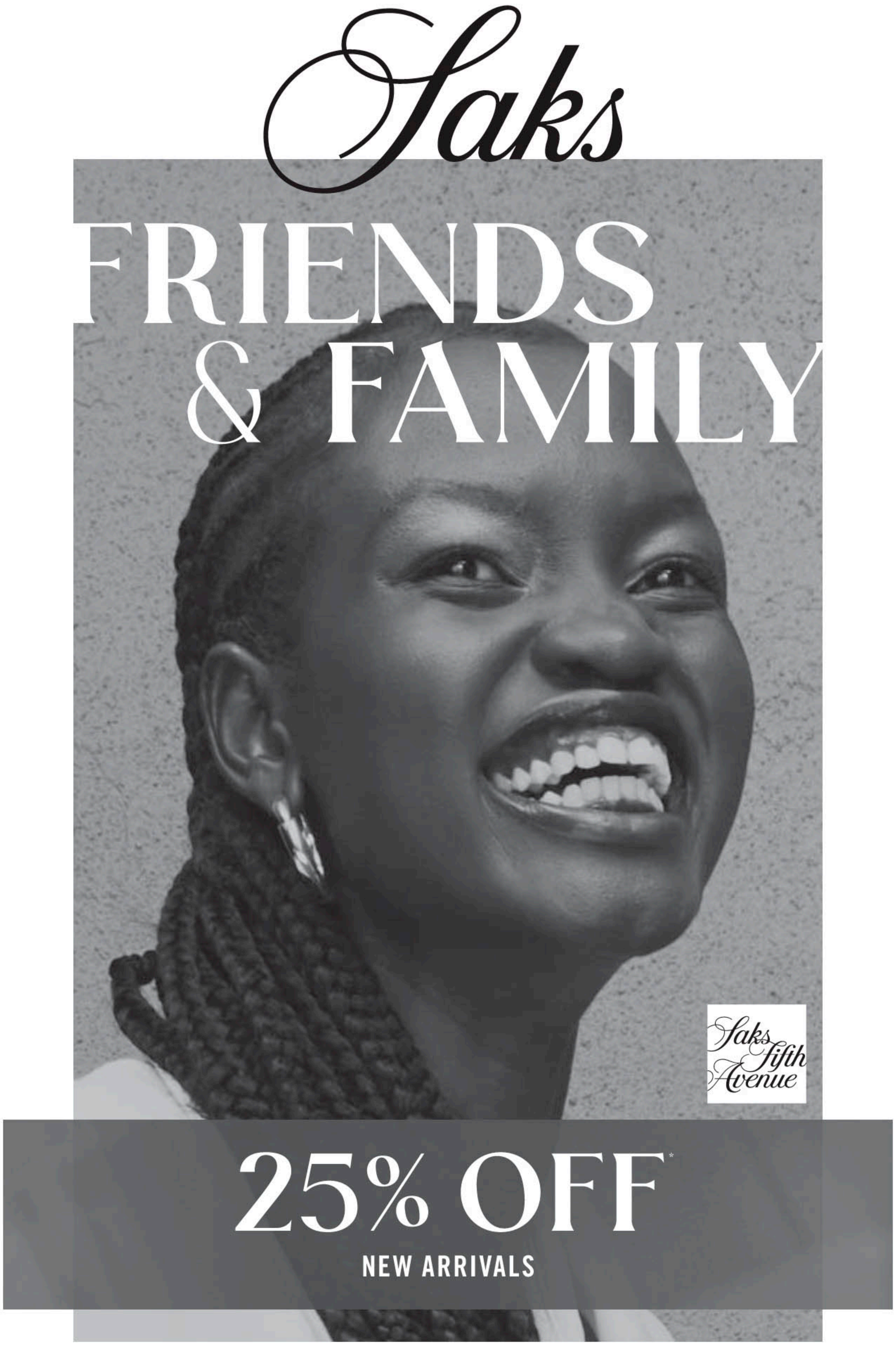
While the two communicated over an encrypted platform, they freely discussed the military activities of a rebel group and identified command and logistic centers. The court filings portray Mr. Lemma as an enthusiastic spy.

In one exchange, the intelligence official provided specific subjects for Mr. Lemma to gather information about. Around September 2022, investigators wrote, the intelligence official stated that it was "time to continue ur support."

Mr. Lemma responded, "Roger that!"

In another chat, the intelligence officer praised Mr. Lemma, perhaps in the hopes that he would continue spying, extolling the "special people" who sacrifice their lives to "protect our proud history." The officer added: "You always remembered. It doesn't matter the results."

Julian E. Barnes contributed reporting.



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The New York Times

Identity Crisis for an Automotive Heartland

PHOTOGRAPHS BY NICK HAGEN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

From top: the Stellantis Mack Assembly Complex in Detroit. Members of the United Automobile Workers striking near a Ford plant in Wayne, a blue-collar Detroit suburb. Mayor John P. Rhaesa of Wayne said, "People just identify cars and Detroit."

By MITCH SMITH

WAYNE, Mich. — Michigan's economy and identity have been intertwined with auto manufacturing since Henry Ford perfected the moving assembly line and made Detroit a magnet for blue-collar workers seeking a middle-class foothold.

But the symbiosis between the state and its signature industry has been repeatedly challenged in recent decades by competition from abroad, factory closures and balance sheets so bad they required federal bailouts.

In some ways, that makes the current uncertainty in the state feel familiar. Members of the United Automobile Workers are back on the picket lines. Upstart carmakers outside Michigan are growing in market share. And as electric vehicles gain popularity, urgent questions abound about the auto industry's future and Michigan's place in it.

"We cannot let other countries or other states beat us in this competition," said State Senator Darrin Camilleri, a Democrat whose district is home to several car manufacturing facilities, including a Ford plant where workers are striking. "It's not only about ensuring that these jobs are well paid," he added, "but making sure that more of those jobs are still right here."

Three things are true about the auto industry in Michigan: It is far smaller than it once was. It remains vital to the local and national economies. And its ethos — the idea that you can work hard, make something worthwhile and get a fair wage for doing it — is ingrained deeply in the state's sense of itself.

"The Motor City, I think that says it all — people just identify cars and Detroit, and being the leader in that," said John P. Rhaesa, the mayor of Wayne, Mich., a working-class Detroit suburb where striking Ford employees have lined the main drag this week, perking up each time a passing semi-truck blares a supportive honk.

The Big Three — Ford, General Motors and Stellantis — have an estimated 66,000 U.A.W. employees in Michigan, according to one recent study — more than four times as many as any other state. The figure does not include thousands of workers who staff the automakers' corporate offices or the employees of auto parts suppliers whose factories dot Southeast Michigan's industrial corridors.

U.A.W. workers began a targeted strike last week against all three companies, beginning with single plants in Michigan, Missouri and Ohio. The union is seeking significant pay raises, shorter workweeks and job security as the industry moves toward electrification. If deals are not reached by Friday, union officials have warned, the strike could expand to more plants.

Officials in Michigan have tried in recent years to lock in their state's place in the shifting automotive economy, seeking facilities to build not only electric cars, but also the parts that would go inside them. A General Motors factory on the edge of Detroit that was once slated to end production was instead retooled as that company's first plant entirely for electric vehicles. And as Big Three automakers expand their plug-in offerings and compete with electric-focused companies like Tesla, Michigan has aggressively courted new electric battery factories.

"We're still the cornerstone of the automotive industry," said Kenyetta Hairston-Bridges, the chief operating officer and an executive vice president at the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation. "Just like that ingenuity and that innovation that happened decades and decades ago, that is still taking place right now."

But the industry no longer plays an all-consuming role in the state, and its future is in flux. Adding to the uncertainty: Electric cars have fewer parts, and can be made with fewer workers than vehicles with internal combustion engines can.

In Detroit, G.M.'s headquarters still punctuates the skyline, but downtown has flourished in recent years largely because of investments by companies like Rocket Mortgage and Ally Financial. Other sectors, like health care and education, also power the state's economy, though they lack the cultural resonance of carmaking.

Though many Michigan residents continue to work in auto manufacturing and parts manufacturing, federal data shows that those numbers have declined sharply — by some measures, around 50 percent — since 2000.

"I still think of the auto industry as kind of the most important industry in Michigan," said Gabriel Ehrlich, an economic forecaster at the University of Michigan. "But it just doesn't dominate the state economy the way it did 20 or 30 years ago."

Before the strike started, Dr. Ehrlich co-wrote a paper outlining the potential fallout if workers left their posts. A protracted full strike at any of the three companies would lead to tens of thousands of lost jobs and tens of millions of dollars in economic impact, the study found. An eight-week full strike at all three companies could lead to 300,000 lost jobs in Michigan, the authors said, with the damage extending past the assembly plants and into parts suppliers and other industries.

A mural, including scenes from the auto industry, on the side of a movie theater in Wayne.

Matt Wegener, a Ford employee for 28 years who was picketing outside the Wayne plant this week, said he was already paring back his spending because of the strike. Though his factory is so far the only one in Michigan where workers have struck, the effects of individual cutbacks would multiply if the union calls more workers to the picket lines.

"Before the strike even started, I told myself I'm going to start limiting my budget, because I had a feeling that was coming," Mr. Wegener, 48, said as he held up a red "U.A.W. on strike" sign in front of a gate leading to a deserted parking lot. "Just little things that you don't necessarily need at the grocery store. You don't need to get ice cream."

Union workers and their supporters said the short-term pain of a strike could lead to sustained economic benefits if employees received big raises in a new contract and were able to spend more. But if auto companies agree to deals they cannot afford, analysts said, that could ultimately hurt workers and the state.

"I do really worry about these new contract negotiations, if they are not sustainable for the many aspects of the economy that they affect," said Tyler Theile, chief operating officer of Anderson Economic Group, a Michigan-based research and consulting firm whose past clients have included the auto companies. "We don't want to go back to the jobs banks and bankruptcy. Public opinion isn't going to digest another bailout."

66,000

Estimated number of members of the United Automobile Workers who are employed in Michigan by the Big Three auto companies.

Over generations, the auto industry has become part of Michigan's culture, forging the stories not only of industrial cities like Detroit and Flint and Lansing, but also of families whose grandparents moved to the state to find steady union jobs that paid enough to raise children and buy a house.

Detroit's N.B.A. team, the Pistons, is named after an engine component. On the state's highways, Chryslers and Chevys and Fords are notably prevalent, with foreign brands sparser. And young Michigan residents, though in smaller numbers than before, continue to follow relatives into jobs at the auto plants.

Heaven Brown, 22, said she joined family members at the Wayne factory about three years ago. Her overnight shift helping to build Ford Broncos is physically demanding, she said, and it pays just enough to cover her bills. From her place on the picket line this week, she said she hoped the work stoppage would lead to improvements.

"I think everything is going to work; we're going to get what we deserve," Ms. Brown said. Still, she said, "I wonder how long this strike is going to be, how long they're going to wait."

The auto industry and its labor movement are deeply fused into Michigan's politics. About 14 percent of Michigan workers were members of a union in 2022, down from 17 percent of workers in 2012 but still above the national average.

This year, Democrats took full control of state government for the first time since the 1980s. Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and legislative leaders swiftly announced that repealing a so-called right-to-work law and restoring the prevailing wage would be among their first priorities. Both steps reversed Republican policies from the prior decade that unions loathed.

Still, with the state closely divided on partisan lines, Republicans and Democrats have competed fiercely in recent elections for union voters, traditionally a left-leaning constituency.

Donald J. Trump, who made inroads with blue-collar workers during his presidential campaigns, and who has criticized the national move toward electric cars, plans to speak to union members in Detroit next week rather than take part in a Republican debate. Facing skepticism from some people in the union, President Biden has voiced support for the striking workers.

The potential stakes in the standoff — the difference between a thriving auto industry and a struggling one — can be seen across Michigan's industrial landscape.

For hope, look to the crumbling train station in Detroit that Ford brought back to life, or the Stellantis factory that reopened, or the electric vehicle supplier that is building on the site of an abandoned Cadillac plant.

But there are risks of being so tied to one industry. Detroit and Flint were 20th-century boom towns that grew alongside their car factories and became havens for the middle class. Both saw their fortunes reverse when factories closed: Residents fled, property values collapsed, crime rates soared.

Brenda Carter, a Democratic state representative from Pontiac, another factory town that fell on hard times, said she had witnessed many of the same highs and lows in her city.

Ms. Carter spent more than 30 years in the U.A.W., working in machine repair for G.M.

It was a job she took pride in. It was also a job she walked away from before she planned to, accepting an early retirement package in the depths of the Great Recession.

Still, she said, the auto industry is worth investing in, worth hitching Michigan's future to, worth doubling down on, even as it shifts from combustion to electric power.

"We are the manufacturing capital of the world," Ms. Carter said. "That is who we are."

One Week Shy of 99, Carter Is Savoring Life And Some Ice Cream

From Page A1

can history, but his staying power even in hospice has captured the imagination of many admirers around the world. It has generated an extended farewell, one that was unplanned yet remarkably affectionate for a president who was turned out of power by voters after a single term yet transformed his legacy with decades of service that earned him the Nobel Peace Prize.

In the months since he returned to his small-town home to meet his final fate, the outpouring of remembrances has been heartening to his family and friends. Instead of a memorial service he could not attend, Mr. Carter has experienced a living eulogy, soaking up tributes from around the globe. Relatives and advisers say he is

A former first couple 'continue to offer us lessons in dignity.'

aware of what has been written and said, and is deeply grateful.

"He's got so much joy in seeing his presidency and post-presidency revisited," said Paige Alexander, the chief executive of the Carter Center, the nonprofit institution that served as the base for his philanthropic work over the last four decades. "In many ways, that keeps him going — along with peanut butter ice cream."

Mr. Carter has withdrawn from the active life he led until not that long ago. The regular calls with Ms. Alexander are no longer so regular. What animated him for so long were not the ins and outs of the daily news but the projects he devoted his life to, like eradicating certain diseases from developing countries.

"He wasn't asking about politics or the economy," Ms. Alexander recalled. "He just wanted to know what the Guinea worm count was."

While Mr. Carter has good days and bad days, he has not lost his perspicacity or his sometimes curmudgeonly sense of humor. Ms. Alexander recalled a telephone conversation over the summer when she mentioned his upcoming big day.

"If I don't talk to you before your birthday, happy birthday," she recalled telling him.

"I'm going to be 99," he replied. "I'm not sure what's so happy about that."

Nonetheless, the Carter family, both those who are blood relations and those who are part of his longtime circle, are planning various celebrations to mark his century-minus-one milestone on Oct. 1.

The Carter Center is asking supporters to send pictures or videos that will be arranged in a digital mosaic. It collected 6,000 in the first three days, from celebrities like Martin Sheen and Jeff Daniels as well as everyday people from Africa and around the world. Peter Gabriel led an audience in a round of "Happy Birthday, Jimmy" at Madison Square Garden on Monday night.

The next night, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation presented its lifetime achievement award to Mr. Carter and his wife, Rosalynn Carter, with Ms. Alexander collecting on their behalf. The Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum will hold a naturalization swearing-in ceremony for new American citizens on his birthday. David Osborne, known as the "pianist to the presidents," will perform at Mr. Carter's Maranatha Baptist Church.

Mr. Carter was not suffering any particular ailment that prompted him to enter hospice care last February, according to people close to him, but was tired of being in and out of the hospital and wanted to spend his final days at home with Mrs. Carter. Hospice is defined as care for terminally ill patients when the priority is not to provide further treatment but to reduce pain and discomfort toward the end of life. It is meant for patients not expected to live more than six months.

Perhaps it should have been no surprise that Mr. Carter would ignore that time frame. He has been defying death longer than anyone who ever served in the Oval Office. In 2015, he beat cancer that had spread to his brain. In 2019, he bounced back from several falls, including one that broke a hip.

AL DRAGO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

PAUL HENNESSY/NURPHOTO, VIA GETTY IMAGES

A painting of former President Jimmy Carter at the National Portrait Gallery in Washington. Mr. Carter, left, in 2019, has experienced a living eulogy, soaking up tributes from around the globe. Kim Fuller, his niece, said, "Every day's a celebration."

"He's been faced with what he thought was the end multiple times," Jason Carter said.

He spends his days now in the house where he and Mrs. Carter have lived since 1961, a two-bedroom, one-story rambler so plain that The Washington Post once calculated that it was worth less than the Secret Service vehicles parked out front. His children and grandchildren take turns visiting with them, and he has a crew of caregivers but has not seen a doctor in more than six months.

"It's a day-to-day thing," said Kim Fuller, his niece. The children sometimes read him news articles, and he catches Braves games on television. "They holler at the TV and do everything you do normally when you're watching baseball," Ms. Fuller said.

Mr. Carter can no longer teach Sunday school at Maranatha as he did for so many years — the church's website says almost optimistically that he will not be teaching "until further notice" — so Ms. Fuller has taken over.

Her uncle watches her every Sunday on a live Facebook feed. At first, he would offer critiques. "He would let me know if I had said something that wasn't quite the way it should be," she said. "He doesn't anymore. I kind of miss that. I would like for him to."

Mrs. Carter, the genteel former first lady who promoted mental health while in the White House, announced in May that she had dementia, and the two of them spend days together quietly. They recently celebrated their 77th anniversary.

"She's very happy," Jason Carter said. "She's reminiscing and remembering some of the great times she's had." As Ms. Alexander put it, "They continue to offer us lessons in dignity and grace."

For Mrs. Carter's 96th birthday last month, Ms. Fuller said she organized a butterfly release at the house. Ms. Fuller said her uncle was aware of his own upcoming birthday.

"He wants to reach 99, I know that," she said. "The last month has been different for him," she added, but "I am just praying every day that he makes it to 99."

"It's a bittersweet one," she added. "We've all been on pins and needles since February. Every day's a celebration." But as her uncle has demonstrated time and again for nearly a century, no one will dictate to him. "He's going to do exactly what he wants to do when he wants to do it."

For Mr. Carter, any birthday celebration will be marked at home, surrounded by family.

"He's really significantly limited physically and he is coming to the end, there's no doubt about that," Jason Carter said. "He is, I think, frustrated by that. But he is at home. He's together with his wife. They're in love. They're at peace and you don't get more from that. You certainly don't get more than they got from this life. And the end is exactly how you would hope for it to be."

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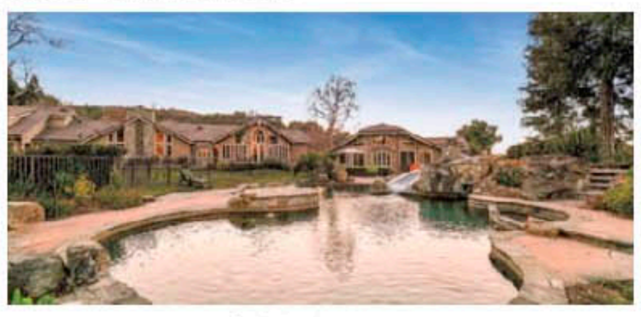

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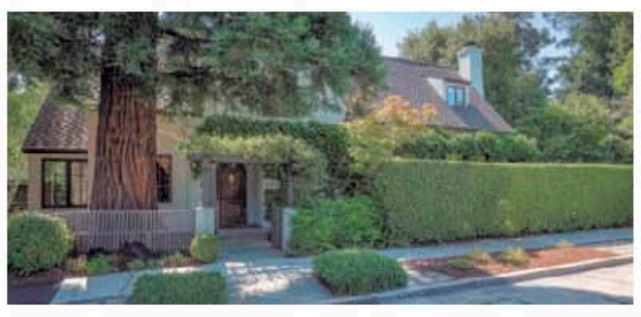

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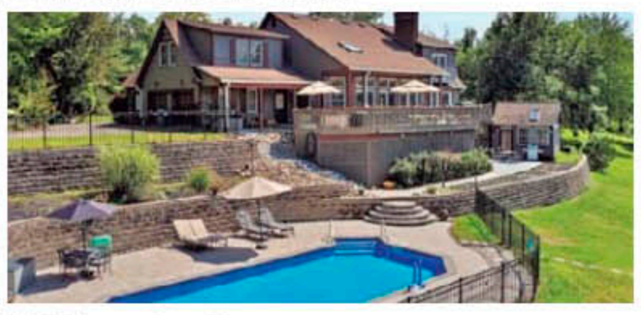

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Biden Compels Federal Agencies to Factor Climate Change Into Budgets

By CORAL DAVENPORT

ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Near the site of Willow, an oil drilling project in Alaska. Under a directive from the White House, the "social cost" of its carbon output could be $1.7 billion per year.

A directive issued on Thursday by the Biden administration would, for the first time, have federal agencies consider the economic damage caused by climate change when deciding what kinds of vehicles, equipment and goods to buy.

The new guidance from President Biden could affect purchasing decisions across the government, from agriculture to defense to health care. The idea is to take into account the greenhouse gases generated by goods and projects, how they contribute to global warming, and the cost of that to the economy.

The potential impact is significant. The federal government is the world's largest consumer of goods and services, spending roughly $600 billion each year. The changes could shift purchases for the federal government's fleet of roughly 600,000 cars and trucks from gasoline-powered to all-electric vehicles, redirect the flow of billions of dollars of government grants and reshape or kill some major construction projects.

"It will be the first time this 'whole of government approach' is used to evaluate the climate consequences of government actions," said Richard Revesz, Mr. Biden's regulatory chief, who is helping lead the initiative. Mr. Revesz, a climate law expert, has focused on using cost-benefit analysis when designing policies meant to protect human health and the environment.

Critics said they feared the new step would end up harming the fossil fuel industry.

"It will constrain the development of traditional energy sources and infrastructure build out, and give a new rationale to boost the development of wind and solar and E.V.s," said Mandy Gunaskera, who served as chief of staff of the Environmental Protection Agency in the Trump administration and is now a visiting fellow at the Heritage Foundation, a conservative research organization.

Since the Obama administration, the E.P.A. has used a metric to calculate the economic harm caused by one ton of planet-warming carbon dioxide pollution, known as "the social cost of carbon," and applied it when regulating polluting industries, such as transportation and energy.

The new guidance would expand that approach to thousands of other decisions across the federal government and help determine whether highways or other infrastructure projects are built, what kind of government buildings are purchased, leased or constructed, what kind of energy is purchased to heat and cool them, or which of a set of competing grants are approved.

In the Obama administration, White House economists calculated the social cost of carbon at $42 a ton. The Trump administration lowered it to less than $5 a ton. Under Mr. Biden, the cost was adjusted for inflation and set at $51. Officials are now working on an update that is expected to jump to around $190 a ton.

Richard Revesz is the president's regulatory chief and helps lead his new initiative.

That change could radically reshape regulatory and procurement decisions.

For example, this year, the Biden administration approved Willow, an $8 billion oil drilling project on pristine federal land in Alaska that is estimated to lead to the release of roughly 9.2 million tons of carbon dioxide pollution per year. Under the $51 social cost of carbon, the damage to the economy from that pollution is estimated at roughly $469 million per year. If the cost of carbon is set at $190 a ton, the economic damage estimate would be $1.7 billion per year. And that cost could affect the government's decision on whether to permit such a project.

"When the government decides how to evaluate different purchasing options, it will have to take into account this factor and they'll have to weigh it in a particular way," Mr. Revesz said. "And that was not part of government policy. Until now."

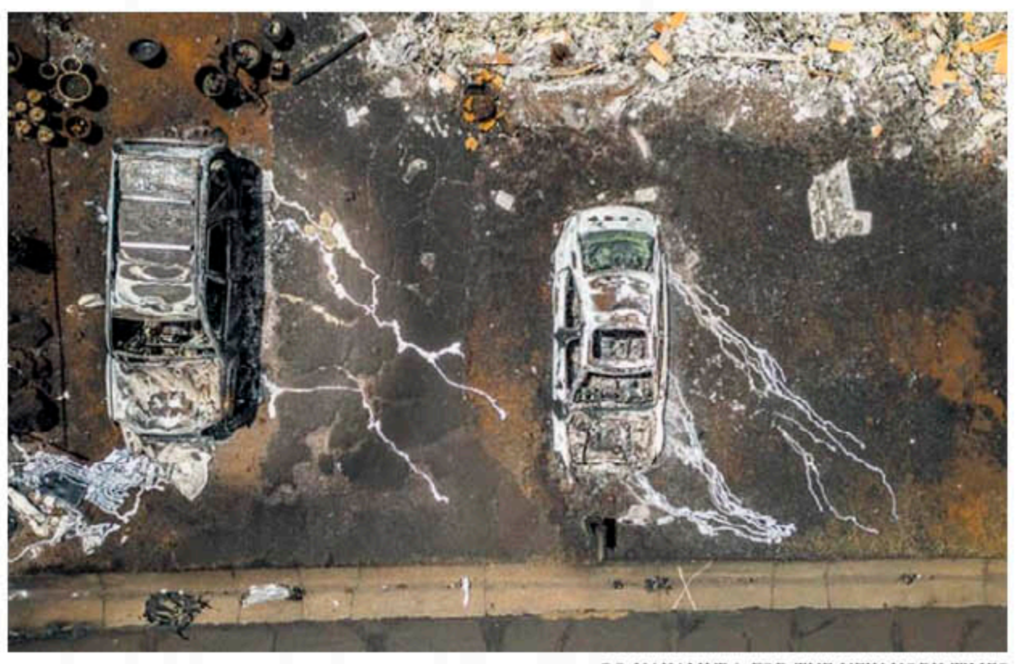
Still, the new directive does not carry the force of law and, in some cases, agencies could be prevented by existing statutes from using it. For example, it would not apply to the purchase of combat vehicles such as tanks, Mr. Revesz said. And agencies would not be expected to use it in budget and procurement decisions that have little to no carbon impact.

But the goal, Mr. Revesz said, would be to ensure that the new system of accounting takes root in most of the federal government, where it could endure into future administrations.

There is some legal precedent that supports the government's use of the social cost of carbon. One challenge to the Biden administration's decision to set the cost at $51 a ton has already been dismissed by a federal judge. In other cases, judges have found in favor of litigants who have sued to compel agencies to use the social cost of carbon in specific decisions.

Still, expanding the metric to cover procurement decisions could get tangled up in debates over how to determine the number of carbon dioxide emissions associated with building, say, a new highway.

"There are undoubtedly a series of procurement and legal issues that would have to be worked out," said Michael Greenstone, an economist at the University of Chicago who helped the Obama administration to develop the social cost of carbon. "The plumbing to make this work is where the rubber hits the road."



GO NAKAMURA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Destroyed cars after a wildfire in Lahaina, Hawaii, last month.

Hottest August on Record Caps a Scorching Summer

By DELGER ERDENESANAA

Temperature records continue to topple. Last month was the planet's warmest August in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's 174-year record, agency officials said on Thursday. The global surface temperature for the month was 2.25 degrees Fahrenheit, or 1.25 degrees Celsius, above the 20th-century average.

"We certainly are setting records that are significantly larger," Karin Gleason, a climatologist at NOAA said.

July and June were also the warmest on record globally, meaning the Northern Hemisphere saw its warmest summer on record and the Southern Hemisphere its warmest winter.

Global surface sea temperatures hit a record high for the fifth month in a row.

In the United States, this August was the ninth-warmest on record. But Florida, Louisiana and Mississippi were especially hot, with all three states experiencing their warmest August ever.

Climate-led disasters come with huge costs.

August saw the formation of 19 named storms across the globe, with eight reaching tropical cyclone strength. Six of these storms, including two hurricanes, happened in the Atlantic Ocean — more than usual for the region.

The United States has had 23 separate weather and climate disasters that cost more than $1 billion each in damage so far in 2023, the most in one year, even adjusted for inflation. These included the Category 3 Hurricane Idalia in Florida and the wildfires in Hawaii last month. The Maui wildfires were exacerbated by winds from Hurricane Dora and are believed to have killed 97 people.

Southern California also had its first tropical storm watch during Hurricane Hilary in late August. Many areas there received more rain in 48 hours than they typically get all year.

Warmer temperatures fuel stronger storms.

The effect of climate change on hurricanes is not straightforward. As wind patterns change, there may be slightly fewer tropical storms. But when storms do form, they will gather more energy from the hotter ocean and become stronger, sometimes over a single day or just a few hours. More hurricanes are likely to reach Category 3 or higher, as Idalia did.

Probably another record-breaking year.

2023 will almost certainly be either the warmest or second-warmest year on record after 2016, NOAA scientists said. El Niño conditions, which release additional heat into the atmosphere and are associated with warmer years on average, are expected to last through the northern hemisphere winter.

"We expect the heat to continue for the rest of 2023," Ms. Gleason said. Depending on how long El Niño persists, on top of the steady global warming from climate change, "It's possible that 2024 could be even warmer than 2023," she said.

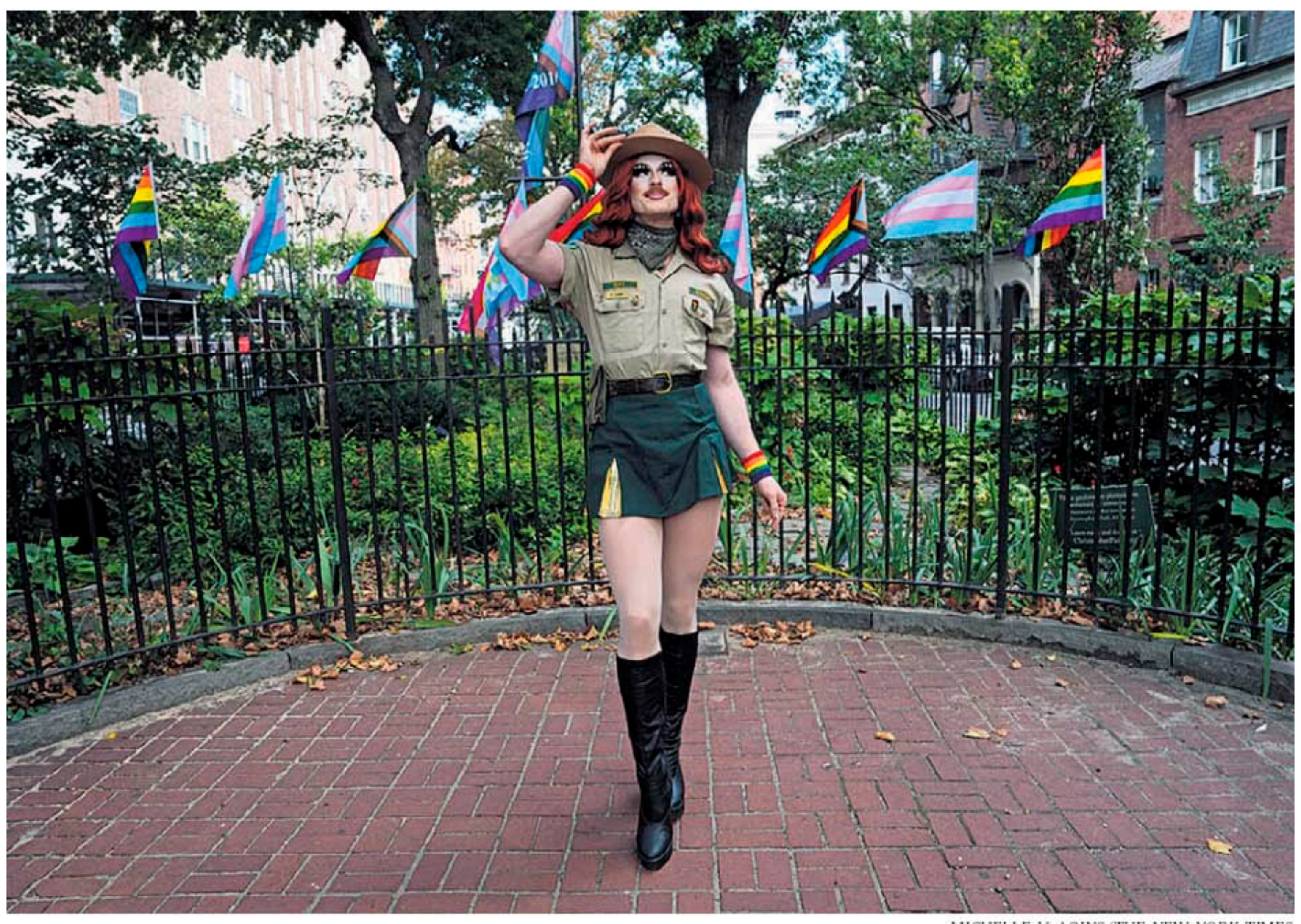
In New York This Week: Burning Man for Climate Geeks

By CARA BUCKLEY

It's almost like the climate crisis has gotten itself a new team of publicists, judging from the boggling array of sessions, panels, VI.P. dinners, workshops and fireside chats happening this week as part of Climate Week NYC.

Among the record number of 585 official affiliated events: Breath work to build resilience within the climate movement, workshops on ecologically friendlier wine, an ice cream giveaway to highlight "climate risks to the flavors we love," and at least five sessions aimed at stemming the environmental ravages caused by the clothing industry, including a daylong circular fashion festival.

This was in addition to two sold out Earth-focused drag shows, "SAVE HER!" hosted by the eco-drag queen Pattie Gonia, and the spectacle of Prince William wading into New York's East River to visit the Billion Oyster Project, which works to restore reefs using mollusks. There were hundreds of less glittery events too, focused on decarbonizing agriculture, deforestation-free cattle ranching, carbon removal, environmental justice, food waste, green steel and session after session on climate finance and climate tech.



MICHELLE V. AGINS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Pattie Gonia, the "eco-drag queen," whose shows during Climate Week NYC quickly sold out.

Chaotic, sprawling, and borderline circuslike, Climate Week NYC, which officially runs from Sept. 17 to 24, is in many ways a showcase of human innovation, the countless ways people in many industries are working to slow and potentially reverse the enormous harms humans have done to the planet.

A magnet for start-ups, branding consultants, sustainability officers, scientists, policy wonks and assorted advocates, it's a place to network, forge partnerships, see and be seen, and find solace with like-minded folks, albeit ones who can afford to journey to and stay in the country's most expensive city.

"This is like Burning Man for the climate geeks," said Oscar Soria, campaign director for Avaaz, an international advocacy organization. "It's also becoming the Davos of climate as well. More exclusionary, more for the elites."

Helen Clarkson, chief executive of The Climate Group, the international nonprofit behind climate week, said it was more like Fashion Week, "where people in the industry you need to work with are in the same place."

For all the frenzy, there are questions about the week's overall impact on mounting catastrophes linked to a warming planet, including flooding in nearly a dozen countries and territories. Banks continue to pour trillions of dollars into fossil fuel expansion, and oil and gas companies are not only failing to meet their climate pledges, but also ramping up production to meet continuing demand for fossil fuels.

"What's the sum total of all the announcements and initiatives, what does it add up to in terms of billions of dollars moved, and millions of tons of emissions reduced?" said Alden Meyer, a former director with the Union of Concerned Scientists and now with E3G, a climate change think tank. "And there's also our failure to help vulnerable countries and communities deal with the impact."

Some expressed the hope that climate solutions might scale up as fast as Climate Week has. The event began as a much more modest affair in 2009, when it was centered around panel discussions at the Morgan Library & Museum that brought international negotiators together in preparation for an upcoming United Nations climate summit.

Rachel Kyte, a dean emeritus of the Fletcher School at Tufts University, said the pace picked up in 2014 when Ban Ki-moon, then the United Nations secretary general, convened a U.N. Climate Summit during Climate Week. A simultaneous climate march filled New York's streets with some 311,000 demonstrators.

"The climate tent has been growing exponentially the last few years, and now encompasses almost every aspect of civil society," Katharine Hayhoe, chief scientist at The Nature Conservancy, wrote in a text message. "What do you need to solve the climate crisis? The answer is, everyone."

Among the first time visitors to this year's Climate Week NYC was Pattie Gonia, who bills herself as an environmental drag queen. On Tuesday, she met with Interior Secretary Deb Haaland, at the Stonewall National Monument near the famous bar in Greenwich Village that helped shape the gay rights movement.

As an event gets fashionable, concerns about elitism grow.

Mx. Gonia has made a mission out of connecting queer people, people of color and lower income communities with the outdoors, and drew conservative fire this past summer for appearing in a campaign for The North Face.

"We need joy, we need community, we need to celebrate what we have done," said Mx. Gonia, whose birth name is Wyn Wiley.

Mx. Gonia said both the "SAVE HER!" drag shows at Brooklyn's House of Yes sold out quickly, evidence that there was space in the climate movement for more than doom and gloom.

"Gloom is a very inspiring motivator in the short term," she said. "It's not an inspiring motivator in the longer term. This is not some toxic positivity movement. This is 'hey, we know the problems are real.' So are the solutions, right? Right."

Indeed by one count, done by The Wall Street Journal, the word "solution" appears in this year's Climate Week NYC agenda some 40 times more often than the world "problem."

"You come to be inspired by the gathering power of people in the streets and the genius of the new entrepreneurs," said Durwood Zaelke, an environmental litigator and self-described "grizzled veteran of the climate wars." "You can see the power in the streets being translated into solutions in the lab and getting to scale."

"You should come away with some renewed optimism," Mr. Zaelke continued. "We're in the climate resistance. This is a battle. You need to get some of your energy from your colleagues because if you're alone, you're going to die."

KENNY HOLSTON/THE NEW YORK TIMES

A handful of House Republicans defied Speaker Kevin McCarthy, center, by blocking a funding bill for the second time this week.

Hard-Right Republicans Rebuke McCarthy, Again

By ANNIE KARNI

WASHINGTON — Right-wing House Republicans dealt another stunning rebuke to Speaker Kevin McCarthy on Thursday, blocking a Pentagon funding bill for the second time this week in a vivid display of G.O.P. disunity on federal spending that threatens to lead to a government shutdown in nine days.

Just hours after Mr. McCarthy signaled he had won over some of the holdouts and was ready to move forward, a handful of Republicans broke with their party to oppose a routine measure to allow the military appropriations bill to come to the House floor for debate, joining with Democrats to defeat it.

It was a major black eye for Mr. McCarthy, who has on multiple occasions admonished his members in private for taking the rare step of bringing down such measures, known as rules, proposed by their own party — a previously unheard-of tactic. And it signaled continuing right-wing resistance to funding the government, even after the speaker had capitulated Wednesday night to demands from hard-right Republicans for deeper spending cuts as part of any bill to prevent a shutdown on Oct. 1.

By Thursday afternoon, lawmakers were flying home for the weekend, scrapping plans to stay in session to pass spending legislation after a week in which they were unable to make any progress toward resolving their impasse.

"This is a whole new concept of individuals that just want to burn the whole place down," Mr. McCarthy said on Thursday. "It doesn't work."

To try to satisfy those who said they would not vote for any stopgap bill, Republicans were coalescing behind a plan for next week to try to advance three or four of the annual appropriations bills containing steep spending cuts demanded by the hard right as a show of good faith to the conservatives. That approach would do nothing to avert a shutdown, since the Senate has not passed any appropriations bills, so there would be no chance for them to become law before funding runs out on Sept. 30.

Still, some House Republicans appeared ready to plow ahead.

"We've got to do our job," said Representative Chip Roy, Republican of Texas. "That's it — it's that simple."

Democrats were left shocked at the level of dysfunction across the aisle.

"Just really a collapse," declared Representative Rosa DeLauro of Connecticut, the senior Democrat on the Appropriations Committee. "There really isn't any leadership."

Representative James E. Clyburn of South Carolina, a member of Democratic leadership, said he had never before seen a speaker lose a rule vote so many times — three times in four months, and twice this week alone — something that had not happened for two decades before Mr. McCarthy assumed the post.

"I don't quite understand this," Mr. Clyburn said of Mr. McCarthy's strategy, before suggesting he consider cutting a deal with the top House Democrat that could pass both chambers and keep the government open. "My advice is, 'Go sit down with Hakeem Jeffries.' If he's got a solid majority of his caucus, why wouldn't he? This is the tail wagging the dog. That's not the way to do it."

But Mr. McCarthy is keenly aware that if he were to turn to Democrats for help funding the government, he would face a right-wing effort to remove him from his post.

On Thursday, the final vote was 216 to 212 against the rule to allow the military spending measure to proceed. All Democrats voted against it, given their opposition to the funding levels in the bill and other provisions that were added by Republicans who say they need to eliminate "woke" policies in the military.

Joining in the Republican defections were Representatives Andy Biggs of Arizona, Dan Bishop of North Carolina, Eli Crane of Arizona, Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia and Matt Rosendale of Montana. Representative Tom Cole of Oklahoma, the chairman of the Rules Committee and an ally of Mr. McCarthy, ultimately voted "no" as well so that he would have the ability to request that the vote be reconsidered, a step he took immediately after it was defeated.

But with the House in chaos, leaders quickly asked for a recess to regroup, and it was not clear when they would try again. Mr. McCarthy and his top allies spent the rest of the day in closed-door meetings with members of various factions of the conference, desperately trying to find consensus on what was ultimately nothing more than an attempt at a messaging bill. The spending cuts they were negotiating had no chance of passage in the Democratic-controlled Senate.

In a sign of the complex and confounding resistance Mr. McCarthy is facing within his own party, the group of defectors on Thursday was slightly different from the five who broke with the G.O.P. to oppose the same measure two days earlier.

Ms. Greene, who has emerged as a McCarthy ally in this Congress and supported the debt ceiling bill he negotiated with President Biden, on Tuesday had voted with her party on the rule. But she said online that she voted against it on Thursday because it contained funding for the war in Ukraine.

"Our Defense bill should not fund our DOD for blood money for the Ukraine war, that's why I'm a NO," she wrote on X, the platform formerly known as Twitter.

Ms. Greene was also aligned with hard-right Republicans who made it clear they planned to stand in opposition to Mr. McCarthy's latest stopgap funding proposal, even after he bowed to their demands for steep spending cuts that stood little chance of surviving in the Senate. The group, which included at least seven Republicans, appeared to be large enough to defeat it given the party's tiny majority, which allows for no more than four defections if all Democrats vote in opposition.

A black eye for the speaker amid efforts to prevent a federal shutdown.

Ms. Greene's vote Thursday morning came just hours after former President Donald J. Trump weighed in for the first time on the spending fight, using his social media website to encourage Republicans to vote against a temporary funding measure to avert the shutdown of a government he accused of being weaponized against him.

"They failed on the debt limit, but they must not fail now," Mr. Trump wrote, referring to right-wing opposition to the deal Mr. McCarthy made with Mr. Biden to avert a federal debt default.

The problems with the defense measure were only the most immediate challenge. On Thursday, a group of hard-right Republicans made it clear that they would oppose any stopgap funding plan, no matter what Mr. McCarthy offered them. The group included those who blocked the military spending measure — Mr. Biggs, Mr. Crane, Mr. Rosendale, Mr. Bishop — and others, including Representative Matt Gaetz of Florida, the ringleader of the Republican opposition to Mr. McCarthy's plans.

Representative Tim Burchett, Republican of Tennessee, compared passage of a stopgap measure known as a continuing resolution to feeding a drug addiction and said he did not intend to back one under any circumstances.

"We're going to keep passing the C.R., and guess what? We are going to pass another C.R.," he said, calling the prospect "ridiculous."

Representative Anna Paulina Luna, Republican of Florida, wrote defiantly on the X platform: "I saw what happened with the debt ceiling. I saw what happened with negotiations & the senate. HOLD THE LINE #NOCR"

Luke Broadwater and Carl Hulse contributed reporting.

Health Insurance Restored For Nearly 500,000 People

By NOAH WEILAND

Nearly 500,000 people, many of them children, will keep Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program coverage after state officials discovered major errors in their procedures for reviewing eligibility for the programs, federal officials said on Thursday.

After a pandemic-era policy that guaranteed Medicaid coverage lapsed in April, states began checking to see whether tens of millions of Americans covered by the programs still qualified, removing them from the rolls if their incomes had surpassed program limits, among other reasons.

Many states conducted the checks with software that automatically verified whether people were still eligible, using government databases to verify income levels. But 30 states, federal officials confirmed on Thursday, had been vetting statuses incorrectly.

As a result, legions of children lost health coverage when their parents did not return the required forms to confirm the eligibility of everyone in a household. The Biden administration last month warned states about the problem, giving them two weeks to report whether they had improperly disenrolled people.

"This will help strengthen access to Medicaid not just during this very challenging renewal transition, but also in the long term," Chiquita Brooks-LaSure, the Medicare and Medicaid chief, said at a news conference on Thursday.

The unwinding of Medicaid enrollment has had catastrophic consequences for poor families and children across the country. More than seven million people have lost coverage through the program since the enrollment requirement ended in April, according to state data analyzed by KFF, a nonprofit health policy research group.

Nearly 1.4 million children have lost coverage in states that have shared enrollment figures broken down by age. Children have more generous eligibility limits for enrollment in Medicaid, and thus greater leeway to remain on the rolls.

It is still unclear how many children might have lost coverage because of the technical errors. Daniel Tsai, a senior Medicaid official, said at the Thursday briefing that it was likely a "significant portion" of the almost 500,000 Americans who are keeping their coverage.

States are still reviewing data on who improperly lost insurance, he said.

The Biden administration had ordered states that discovered the errors to halt what are known as procedural disenrollments, which occur when a recipient does not confirm eligibility with a state Medicaid agency, then loses coverage.

Mr. Tsai said that some states had fixed the problem rapidly and would soon be able to restart eligibility checks, "as long as they continue to have that fix in place and when they can guarantee that no eligible people are disenrolled because of the issue," he said. Other states, Mr. Tsai added, could take months to make the fixes and resume enrollment decisions.

In many of the 30 states identified on Thursday, fewer than 10,000 people were affected by the technical errors, according to a spreadsheet federal officials shared with reporters. But in Pennsylvania and Nevada, more than 100,000 people in each state were impacted.

Kristle Muessle, a spokeswoman at Nevada's Department of Health and Human Services, said in a statement that roughly 114,000 people had regained Medicaid coverage after state officials learned of the erroneous disenrollments.

The state figures published on Thursday were estimates, meaning that many more children may have been affected by the improper eligibility checks than is currently known. Some states that admitted to conducting the checks incorrectly are still assessing how many people were impacted, suggesting the total could be well over 500,000.

"The scope of this problem is large," said Joan Alker, the executive director of the Georgetown University Center for Children and Families.

Still, she noted, the numbers cited by the Biden administration on Thursday left out children who may have unfairly lost coverage in other ways. In Texas, she said, where officials have made only modest use of automatic renewals, many children were losing coverage because of faulty enrollment procedures the state had yet to correct. Nearly 900,000 Texans have lost coverage in the process so far, according to KFF, roughly 80 percent of them children.

If You Owned a U.S. Dollar LIBOR-Based Instrument Between August 2007 and May 2010

A Settlement Totaling $101 Million Could Affect You

There are lawsuits impacting individuals and institutions that entered into over-the-counter financial derivative and non-derivative instruments directly with 17 banks and that received payments tied to U.S. Dollar LIBOR. A Settlement totaling $101 million has been reached with Coöperatieve Rabobank U.A. ("Rabobank"), Lloyds Banking Group plc, Lloyds Bank plc, HBOS plc, and Ban of Scotland plc (together, "Lloyds"), Royal Bank of Canada ("RBC"), and Portigon AG and Westdeutsche Immobilien Servicing AG (together "Portigon"). Earlier settlements totaling $680 million were reached with Barclays, Citibank, Deutsche Bank, HSBC, MUFG, Norinchukin, and SocGen bringing the total settlement amount to $781 million. The remaining Non-Settling Defendants include Bank of America, Credit Suisse, JPMorgan Chase, Royal Bank of Scotland, and UBS.

What are the lawsuits about?
The litigation claims that the banks manipulated the U.S. Dollar LIBOR rate during the financial crisis, artificially lowering the rate for their own profit, which resulted in class members receiving lower interest payments for their U.S. Dollar LIBOR-Based Instruments from the banks than they should have. Plaintiffs assert antitrust, breach of contract, and unjust enrichment claims. Rabobank, Lloyds, RBC, and Portigon deny all claims of wrongdoing.

Who is included in the Settlement?
You are included if you (individual or entity) directly purchased certain U.S. Dollar LIBOR-based instruments from Bank of America, MUFG, Barclays, Citibank, Credit Suisse, Deutsche Bank, HSBC, JPMorgan Chase, Lloyds, Norinchukin, Rabobank, Royal Bank of Canada, Royal Bank of Scotland, Société Générale, UBS, or Portigon (or their subsidiarie or affiliates) in the United States; and owned the instruments at any time between August 2007 and May 2010. The instruments in the Settlement Class include certain interest rate swaps, forward rate agreements, asset swaps collateralized debt obligations, credit default swaps, inflation swaps, total return swaps, options, and bonds/floating rate notes.

What does the Settlement provide?
The Settlement will create a Settlement Fund totaling $101 million that will be used to pay eligible Class Members who submit valid claims, as well as at attorneys' fees not to exceed one third of the gross settlement, expenses not to exceed $5,500,000, and service awards to the Class Representatives not to exceed $100,000 per Representative. Additionally, Rabobank, Lloyds, RBC, and Portigon will provide certain cooperation to the Plaintiffs in their ongoing litigation against the Non-Settling Defendants.

How can I get a payment?
You can submit a Proof of Claim online or by mail. The deadline to submit a Proof of Claim is February 10, 2024. You do not need to submit a Proof of Claim to share in the Settlement if you previously submitted a valid Proof of Claim in the prior settlements and do not seek to modify or supplement your Proof of Claim. You are entitled to receive a payment if you have a qualifying transaction with any of the following banks: Bank of America, MUFG, Barclays, Citibank, Credit Suisse, Deutsche Bank, HSBC, JPMorgan Chase, Lloyds, Norinchukin, Rabobank, Royal Bank of Canada, Royal Bank of Scotland, Société Générale, UBS, or Portigon (or their subsidiaries or affiliates). You do not need to have transacted with Rabobank, Lloyds, RBC, and Portigon specifically. At this time, it is unknown how much each Class Member who submits a valid claim will receive. Visit www.USDollarLiborSettlement.com for more information on submitting a Proof of Claim.

What are my rights?
If you are a member of the Settlement Class and you do not file a timely claim, you will lose your right to receive money or benefits from the $101 million settlement with Rabobank, Lloyds, RBC, and Portigon unless you submitted a valid claim in a prior settlement in the OTC Action. If you would like to retain your right to file your own lawsuit against Rabobank, Lloyds, RBC, and Portigon, you must opt out of the Settlement Class by **November 17, 2023.** If you stay in the Settlement Class, you may object to the Settlement by **November 17, 2023.**

The Court will hold a hearing on **December 12, 2023** to consider whether to approve the Settlement and approve Class Counsel's request of attorneys' fees of up to one-third of the Settlement Fund, plus reimbursement of costs and expenses and service payments to the Class Representatives. You or your own lawyer may appear and speak at the hearing at your own expense. More information about the Settlement is available on the Settlement website ww.USDollarLiborSettlement.com, and in the Long Form Notice accessible on that website, or by calling 1-888-619-8688.

'Tired of Losing': Pennsylvania G.O.P. Aims to Avoid Senate Infighting

By MICHAEL C. BENDER

PITTSBURGH — To avoid costly Senate battleground defeats in 2024, Republicans have a plan: run like Democrats.

That means trying to replicate Democrats' success at avoiding the kinds of vicious intraparty battles that have weakened Republican nominees in recent years.

It remains to be seen whether the party's attempt to sidestep fault lines between Trumpian loyalists and traditional conservatives will be effective, but the strategy's first victory could come in Pennsylvania, where David McCormick appears to have cleared the Republican primary field of any major challengers.

Mr. McCormick — a former hedge fund executive who lost one of the party's nastiest and most expensive Senate primaries to Dr. Mehmet Oz last year — will announce his new campaign on Thursday evening in Pittsburgh. He is aiming to unseat Senator Bob Casey, a Democrat who has announced plans to seek a fourth six-year term in office.

Senate Republicans have begun similar efforts to clear the path for Gov. Jim Justice in West Virginia, where Senator Joe Manchin III, a Democrat, is weighing a re-election bid. Mr. Justice, however, faces a primary fight against Representative Alex Mooney, who has vowed to oppose the "establishment swamp."

In Montana, Senator Steve Daines, who is the chairman of Senate Republicans' campaign arm, has endorsed Tim Sheehy's bid to take on Senator Jon Tester, the incumbent Democrat. But Mr. Sheehy, a wealthy businessman and military veteran, could face a primary challenge from Representative Matt Rosendale, who lost to Mr. Tester in 2018 and said last month that Montanans should decide the race, "not Mitch McConnell and the D.C. cartel."

But in Pennsylvania, Mr. McCormick appears to have assuaged concerns from the right. One of his competitors in the Senate primary race last year, Kathy Barnette, is working for Vivek Ramaswamy's 2024 presidential bid.

And crucially, Doug Mastriano, a far-right state senator who was viewed as a potential Senate candidate from the Trumpian wing of the party, has declined to run.

Mr. Mastriano appeared on the verge of endorsing Mr. McCormick after meeting with him and his wife, Dina Powell, a former Goldman Sachs executive who served in the Bush and Trump administrations. During their meeting, the two men found common ground over their military service, according to two McCormick allies familiar with the conversation.

MATT ROURKE/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Last year, David McCormick lost the Senate primary race to Dr. Mehmet Oz by fewer than 1,000 votes. He didn't press for a recount.

"It's time to unify," Mr. Mastriano, who lost the governor's race by 15 percentage points last year, said on Monday in an interview with Real America's Voice, a conservative news outlet. "If he's our nominee, I'm backing him."

Still, Mr. McCormick's ability to avoid a primary — at least so far — does not necessarily signal a new willingness by Republicans to put aside their differences.

Instead, the lack of a serious contender may stem from Mr. McCormick's continued politicking in Pennsylvania, and a reluctance from others to take on the enormous challenge of unseating an incumbent.

Pennsylvania Democrats argue that President Biden's unpopularity will not be as much of a problem in their state. Mr. Biden has already traveled to Pennsylvania at least nine times this year, and Mr. Casey has greeted him at several of those stops. Mr. Casey helped John Fetterman and Josh Shapiro campaign in their successful bids for Senate and governor last year, and aides to both men said they were eager to return the favor.

The race last year to replace the retiring Senator Patrick J. Toomey ended up costing more than $360 million, according to OpenSecrets, a nonpartisan group. Similar amounts could be spent in 2024, when Pennsylvania — unlike Montana and West Virginia — will double as a top battleground in the presidential race.

Mr. McCormick will be able to bring his own financial firepower to the race: He earned a salary of more than $22 million at his most recent job and listed assets worth between $116 million and $290 million on his candidate financial disclosure last year.

Still, many Republicans contend that Pennsylvania is not among the three states where the party has the best chance to win back a majority that has eluded them since 2021. Republicans' clearest opportunities to flip seats appear to be in Montana, Ohio and West Virginia, all of which Donald J. Trump easily won in 2020.

But Mr. McConnell, the Senate Republican leader, raised eyebrows this year when he added Pennsylvania to his list of top priorities. Some Republicans involved in efforts to recruit Senate candidates have privately wondered whether Mr. McConnell's statement was meant to help persuade Mr. McCormick to enter the race.

"Dave has the guts — and the money — to run," said Doug McLinko, a county commissioner in Bradford County who describes himself as a "hard-core Republican on ballot security" and a Trump loyalist.

Mr. McLinko did not support Mr. McCormick in the 2022 race but said he would next year because he had gotten to know the businessman.

Even after losing the primary last year, Mr. McCormick helped Pennsylvania Republicans campaign and raise money for the general election, and he has since continued those efforts.

David McCormick appears to have cleared the field.

His political committee, Pennsylvania Rising, has contributed more than $100,000 to conservative candidates and causes since last year. Multiple Republicans described Mr. McCormick as a ubiquitous presence at state party events since the 2022 election.

Jackie Kulback, the Republican chairwoman in Cambria County, said she was backing Mr. McCormick partly because her choice last year, Jeff Bartos, was not running, but also because she had been impressed by Mr. McCormick when he spoke at a recent event about his private-sector experience in China.

"I like to win and try to get behind winners," Ms. Kulback said. "Not many have Dave McCormick's résumé, and I just feel like he's the whole package."

Mr. Trump, who backed Dr. Oz last year, attacked Mr. McCormick over that same experience in China during the primary race and derided him as a globalist, which helped sink Mr. McCormick's campaign.

The former president has not endorsed anyone in the Pennsylvania race this time. A campaign spokesman declined to comment.

Mr. McCormick lost the primary by fewer than 1,000 votes. He earned good will among some Pennsylvania Republicans by not pressing for a recount, said Sam DeMarco, the Allegheny County Republican chairman. Mr. DeMarco helped collect signatures from more than half of the state party's 67 county chairs supporting Mr. McCormick's candidacy.

"I'm tired of losing," Mr. DeMarco said. "David is someone who can appeal to both sides of the party."

Mr. McCormick was largely unknown in Pennsylvania political circles before last year, partly because he spent much of his adult life outside the state. Democrats are already attacking him over his residency, a strategy that helped torpedo Dr. Oz.

On Thursday, the Pennsylvania Democratic Party described Mr. McCormick in a news release as a "Wall Street mega-millionaire who is lying about living in Pennsylvania."

Pennsylvania Democrats also criticized Mr. McCormick on Wednesday for deleting from his YouTube page a 2022 interview in which he said the Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade was a "huge step forward and a huge victory for the protection of life."

But McCormick's allies insist he is ready to beat back residency questions and to appeal to suburban women — and other voters turned off by Mr. Trump's brand of politics — by leaning on his private-sector experience and his personal background.

Mr. McCormick grew up in Bloomsburg, Pa., about an hour southwest of Scranton, Mr. Biden's birthplace. He graduated from West Point, served five years in the Army — where he was awarded a Bronze Star for his service in the Persian Gulf war of 1991 — and earned a Ph.D. in international relations at Princeton.

He returned to Pennsylvania and joined FreeMarkets, a Pittsburgh-based internet auction company. After the company was sold in 2004, Mr. McCormick held multiple roles in the Bush administration.

In 2009, Mr. McCormick moved to the Northeast and joined Bridgewater Associates, a hedge fund in Westport, Conn., that manages $150 billion in assets. After becoming chief executive in 2017, he resigned in 2022 and turned his attention to a Senate campaign.

As much as Mr. McCormick may try to focus on issues, he will also have to answer questions about Mr. Trump and seek to satisfy the competing factions inside his own party.

"If anyone is drawing the conclusion that a clear path for McCormick is because fractures are gone and we're all singing 'Kumbaya,' they're sadly mistaken," said Sam Faddis, who leads a coalition of right-wing activist groups in the state, adding that he liked Mr. McCormick but remained on the fence about his candidacy.

Mr. Faddis added, "The division between the grass roots and the establishment is massive in Pennsylvania, and massive nationwide."

Recent Polls Show Losses For DeSantis

By MAGGIE ASTOR

Several recent polls show Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida losing ground in the Republican presidential primary, both nationally and in early-voting states.

The numbers undermine an argument pushed by Mr. DeSantis's campaign: that the primary is effectively a two-way race in which he is the only candidate who can consolidate support against former President Donald J. Trump.

A CNN/University of New Hampshire poll released Wednesday found that in New Hampshire, home to the first Republican primary, Mr. DeSantis had lost more than half of his support since the last U.N.H. poll two months ago. He had just 10 percent in the poll — not only far behind Mr. Trump (39 percent), but roughly tied with Vivek Ramaswamy (13 percent), Nikki Haley (12 percent) and Chris Christie (11 percent).

In Iowa, which will hold the first Republican caucus in January, a Fox Business poll released Wednesday showed him at 15 percent, more than 30 points behind Mr. Trump and not far from third place, with Ms. Haley at 11 percent. Unlike the New Hampshire poll, the Fox poll didn't show Mr. DeSantis actively shedding support — he was down only one point compared with the outlet's July survey, which is not significant. But it showed no progress for him as the time he has to make gains grows shorter.

The picture was similar in South Carolina, where another Fox Business poll found him at 10 percent, significantly behind not only Mr. Trump, who was at 46 percent, but also Ms. Haley, the state's former governor, at 18 percent. In July, he had been roughly tied with Ms. Haley.

And nationally, a Quinnipiac University poll released last week showed Mr. DeSantis at 12 percent — a full 50 points behind Mr. Trump and six points below where he was in August.

A spokesman for Mr. DeSantis did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Thursday.

Ruth Igielnik contributed reporting.

G.O.P. Candidates Focus on China to Exhibit Foreign Policy Chops

By MICHAEL GOLD

NEW ALBANY, Ohio — Republican presidential hopefuls eager to demonstrate their foreign policy credentials on the campaign trail have homed in on China, a topic that allows them to assail President Biden while focusing less on global issues more divisive with primary voters.

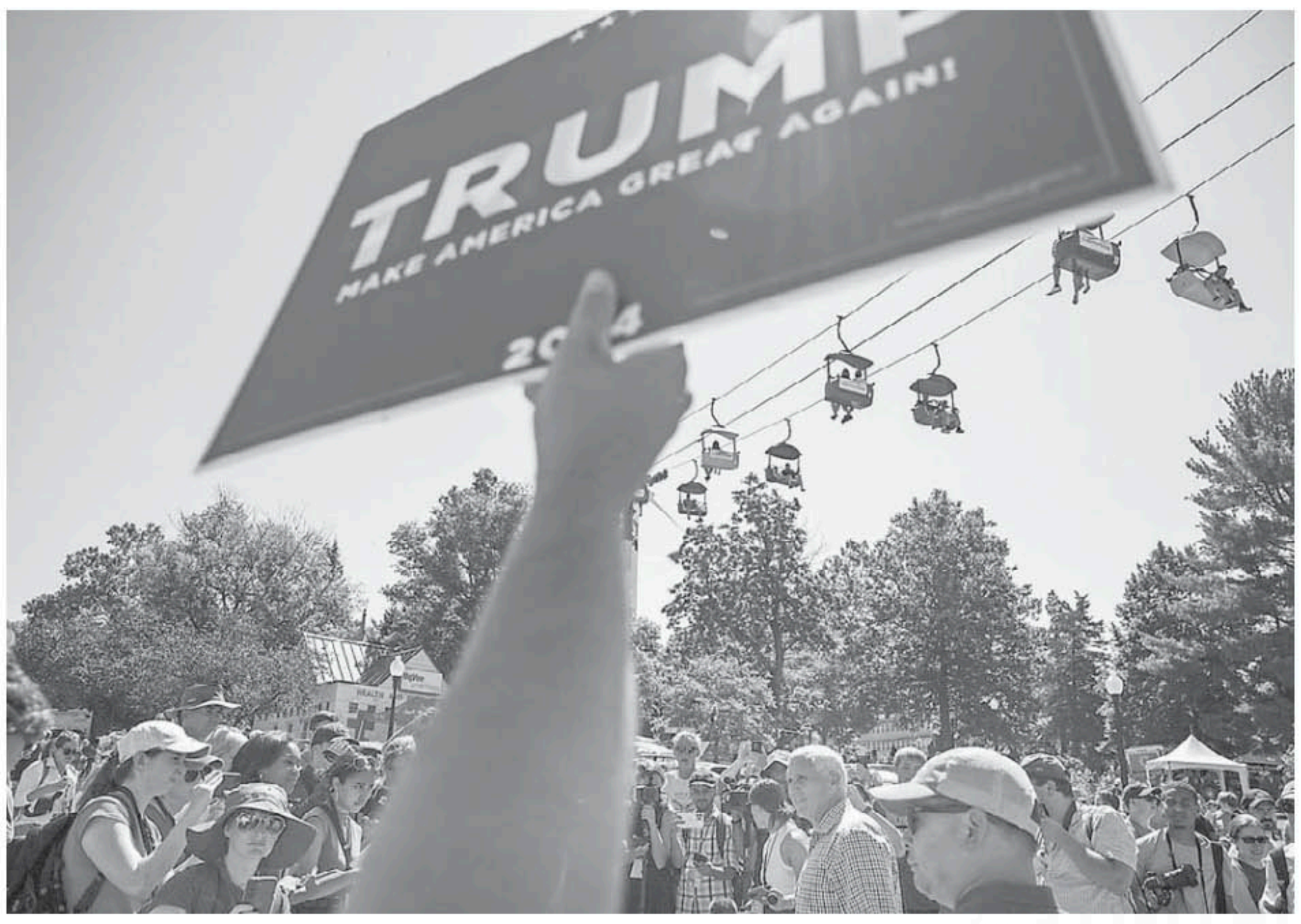
While the candidates are in near-unanimous agreement that Beijing is the United States' foremost foreign adversary, their remarks and policy prescriptions reveal significant divides within their party on how to approach it.

Former Vice President Mike Pence used a China-focused speech on Monday at the Hudson Institute in Washington to criticize Donald J. Trump, his former running mate and the race's front-runner, and other competitors as being isolationist. Nikki Haley, who was one of Mr. Trump's ambassadors to the United Nations, has suggested he was not aggressive enough on China.

Vivek Ramaswamy, in a policy speech on Thursday at a packaging plant in New Albany, Ohio, attacked the protectionist trade policies that have been promoted by some in the party, including Mr. Trump.

Still, to a large extent, the Republican contenders have all raced to see who can be the most hawkish toward Beijing, following a path set by Mr. Trump in 2016 when he made attacking China a central policy plank and then sharply hardened America's trade policy toward the country. By focusing on China, the candidates can make detailed policy pronouncements and play up their credentials, yet avoid discussion of Russia or Ukraine, an increasingly divisive topic among Republicans.

All of the candidates have blasted President Biden's attitude toward China. Mr. Biden has sought to stabilize relations after escalating espionage accusations inflamed tensions. But he has also tried to counter Beijing's growing global influence with a multilateral approach, aiming to shore up economic and diplomatic ties with regional allies.



HAIYUN JIANG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

LOGAN R. CYRUS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Former Vice President Mike Pence, above, has taken a hawkish stance on China. Nikki Haley, left, does not believe that China and the United States can have a productive economic relationship.

One of the Biden administration's focal points has been targeting China's semiconductor industry. The administration has enacted export controls and helped push the CHIPS and Science Act, a bipartisan law that provided billions of dollars toward fostering a homegrown semiconductor industry that could make America less dependent on foreign suppliers.

But even that bipartisan effort has come in for criticism. On Thursday, as Mr. Ramaswamy stood miles away from the site of a new Intel chip manufacturing complex that will be assisted by the CHIPS Act, he attacked the law for including provisions related to addressing climate change.

"I am opposed to the CHIPS Act," he said, "because it is really the Green New Deal masquerading in CHIPS masquerade clothing."

He also claimed without evidence that China had propagated the "climate change agenda" in order to hamper American industry.

Mr. Ramaswamy also said he would focus on job training programs to develop a stronger work force for a robust chip industry. Doing so, he added, would make the United States less reliant on Taiwan, the world's biggest chip producer, and reduce the threat that a Chinese attack on Taiwan might pose on American interests.

The 2024 hopefuls roll out plans to counter Beijing and blast the president.

Mr. Ramaswamy has previously suggested he would be less committed to defending Taiwan if the United States were less reliant on its semiconductors. That view, and his suggestion that Ukraine concede territory to Russia, have drawn fire from Mr. Pence and Ms. Haley.

In his speech on Monday, Mr. Pence, who emphasized his role in crafting the Trump administration's China policy, did not single out Mr. Ramaswamy. But he used the threat of Beijing as a lens through which he could posit his larger view of foreign policy: that America could not retrench from decades of global leadership.

He accused some candidates of "abandoning the traditional conservative position of American leadership on the world stage, and embracing a new and dangerous form of isolationism."

Mr. Pence also criticized President Biden over the U.S. military's chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan, suggesting it had shown weakness on the world stage to China. (The Biden administration has said it was constrained in its options for ending the nation's longest war by decisions made during the Trump-Pence administration.)

During his term, Mr. Trump imposed tariffs on more than $360 billion worth of Chinese goods, initiating a protracted trade war that eased somewhat when the United States and China signed a trade deal in early 2020. Seeking the nomination, his talk on economic issues has been combative even as he has praised China's president, Xi Jinping, for his "iron fist" leadership.

He has vowed to "completely eliminate U.S. dependence on China," in part by reducing imports, restricting American companies' ability to invest there and revoking the "most favored nation" trade status.

Ms. Haley said earlier this year that she believed Mr. Trump had been so focused on trade that he ignored other Chinese threats.

At town halls in New Hampshire on Thursday, she warned that China was outpacing the United States in shipbuilding and developing "neuro-strike weapons" that she said could be engineered to change brain activity and be used to target military commanders and segments of the population.

China was more than just an economic rival, she suggested.

"They don't see us as a competitor," Ms. Haley said. "They see us as an enemy."

Jazmine Ulloa contributed reporting from Bedford, N.H.

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Murdoch Is Retiring From Global Media Empire He Built

From Page A1

timistic about the coming years — I certainly am, and plan to be here to participate in them," he wrote. "I will be watching our broadcasts with a critical eye, reading our newspapers and websites and books with much interest, and reaching out to you with thoughts, ideas, and advice."

The announcement was nonetheless potentially epochal, signaling at least the formal end to an active career during which Mr. Murdoch built the most important and politically influential media empire on the planet. His companies, infused with a brand of right-wing populism, have amassed the power to shape, and at times make or break, presidents and prime ministers.

He built that empire across three continents, helping to shift norms and tastes in journalism, politics and popular culture throughout the English-speaking world. Exhibiting what critics and admirers equally described as a pirate's sensibility, he acted with a willingness to move fast and break things — before that became trendy.

Those tactics also drew legal trouble and a steady stream of condemnation from opponents and even onetime allies, especially after stars of his Fox News Channel embraced former President Donald J. Trump's 2020 election lies — leading to a $787.5 million legal settlement with Dominion Voting, the company at the center of so much of it. Other, related, lawsuits are pending, including one seeking $2.7 billion in damages.

Lachlan Murdoch, though striking a different image from his father's — with tattoos and trademark leather boots — has so far represented continuity for the family companies. Though he has taken a more aggressive stance in entering the streaming sphere — acquiring the ad-supported entertainment streaming service Tubi in 2020 which has since gained in value — he has maintained the positioning of the companies' more stridently conservative outlets.

He was in his current role overseeing Fox News in 2020 and had been initially supportive of the network's far-right firebrand Tucker Carlson. He was also credited inside the company with forcing Mr. Carlson from the Fox lineup after the Dominion settlement in the spring. But there is no indication the younger Mr. Murdoch will change the network's overall course and hard-right approach in the lead-up to another presidential campaign that may well have Mr. Trump atop the Republican ticket.

Until now, Lachlan Murdoch has not stepped forward in any aggressive fashion to be the defining face of the company the way his father had been, and the political and media worlds will be watching closely to see if he takes the retirement as an opportunity to do so.

DAVID PAUL MORRIS/BLOOMBERG

The retirement of Rupert Murdoch, 92, will make his son Lachlan the sole executive in charge of a powerful and vast media realm.

There was no precipitating event for the elder Mr. Murdoch's announcement, beyond the obvious fact that even the healthiest 92-year-old is in his twilight years.

And it has long been said among those who know Mr. Murdoch that he would prefer to retire while still viewed as sharp and active — he was on the Fox lot this week — than as a greatly diminished figure.

But with his announced retirement, Mr. Murdoch was also further solidifying the company beneath his chosen business heir ahead of a looming family battle for control of the empire after Mr. Murdoch's eventual death.

Under the terms of the trust that controls the family's stake in the empire, each of Mr. Murdoch's four eldest children — Lachlan Murdoch, Elisabeth Murdoch, James Murdoch and Prudence Murdoch — will have an equal vote on its future after his death; until then, Mr. Murdoch holds the controlling vote.

Rupert Murdoch's retirement in a sense formalizes the arrangement he had already put in place after the Disney sale, which made Lachlan the day-to-day executive in charge of the two companies at the heart of the Murdoch empire: Fox Corporation and News Corporation.

To wit, the younger Murdoch's titles — executive chairman and chief executive — remain effectively unchanged, barring the small tweak of losing the "co-" he once shared with his father, who maintained similar titles until Thursday morning.

Mr. Murdoch's move to anoint Lachlan as his chosen successor was followed by a lasting rift with his younger son James, who is more left-leaning than his father and brother and had been an advocate, for instance, of a less strident and rock-ribbed version of Fox News.

He and his wife, Kathryn, have criticized climate change denialism at the family-controlled outlets. James appeared to be at least partly referencing Fox News when he linked the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol to "outlets that propagate lies to their audience," in an interview with The Financial Times, blaming them for unleashing "insidious and uncontrollable forces."

> *A bruising succession battle may still loom for the companies.*

People close to James Murdoch, now a major tech and media investor, have over the years raised the possibility that he would seek to rally his two sisters to vote with him to wrest control of the company away from Lachlan.

But it is unclear whether he would have the votes or ultimately the will or the interest to force that sort of bruising family fight. Elisabeth, now the executive chair of the Sister entertainment studio, and Prudence have kept their views of the family company private.

If the elder Mr. Murdoch were to have his way, such a decision would be a long way off. He has often noted that his mother, Dame Elisabeth Murdoch, died just shy of her 104th birthday. As he wrote to employees Thursday, "Our companies are in robust health, as am I."

And the term "semi retirement" was being used inside the Fox Corporation offices on Thursday, indicating that it might be premature to write Mr. Murdoch's corporate obituary just yet.

In his statement to employees on Thursday, Mr. Murdoch wrote, "The battle for the freedom of speech and, ultimately, the freedom of thought, has never been more intense." While Lachlan was "absolutely committed to the cause," Mr. Murdoch wrote, he planed to remain "involved every day in the contest of ideas."

He had a message, too, for his longtime nemeses in the so-called "MSM," or mainstream media, writing that "most of the media" was "in cahoots" with "elites" who have "open contempt for those who are not members of their rarefied class."

It was not all that different from the language he used when he first arrived in the United States in the early 1970s, criticizing the "intellectual showmanship" of the big-name journalists who, in his view, had lost touch in all the self-celebration of that heady, post-Watergate era. Offering an alternative, he pronounced, "We're here to give the public what they want."

All followed from that: His first foray into the U.S. newspaper market, which reinvigorated the slashing, populist style of old. His creation of Fox Broadcasting, which broke the three-network oligopolistic hold on prime-time television and introduced the edgy sort of programming that is now the staple of streaming. The birth of Fox News, which became No. 1 in cable news by giving a very specific public what it wanted: those conservative-leaning Americans who long felt ignored by a traditional journalism world they viewed as biased against them.

Yet it also helped lead to an illegal hacking operation in Britain, to give British tabloid readers what they wanted — juicy inside details about the famous and the newsworthy — as well as the 2020 election coverage that prompted the Dominion suit, to satisfy Trump fans who made up so much of the Fox audience.

It will for now fall to Lachlan to keep that public satisfied amid the new demands and challenges of the streaming era, and for a more fragmented media sphere — leaving a new chapter to be written by a Murdoch not named Rupert.

How a Media Behemoth Was Built Over 7 Decades

By J. EDWARD MORENO

Rupert Murdoch, the 92-year-old media tycoon who announced his retirement on Thursday, spent the past 70 years building a global media empire that gave him influence in journalism, politics and pop culture.

Over dozens of acquisitions, Mr. Murdoch created a media conglomerate known for the rise of the modern tabloid and conservative commentary. His tenure has not been without scandal: One of his properties in Britain folded in 2011 after a phone-hacking inquiry, and he admitted this year that Fox News had spread falsehoods about the 2020 U.S. presidential election. Here's how Mr. Murdoch built his empire:

1950s

The Australian-born mogul ventured into media in 1952 when he inherited his family's business after the death of his father, Keith Murdoch. A 21-year-old Oxford student, he inherited The News of Adelaide, a newspaper in southern Australia with a circulation of 75,000.

1960s

Mr. Murdoch bought several newspapers in Australia in the 1960s, including The Sunday Times in Perth and The Daily Mirror in Sydney. In 1964, he founded The Australian, a national newspaper.

In 1969, he stepped into the British media market, buying The News of the World and The Sun.

1970s

Mr. Murdoch moved into the U.S. media market in 1973 with the purchase of The San Antonio Express and The San Antonio News, which he no longer owns. In 1976, he bought The New York Post, which he sold in 1988 and then reacquired in 1993.

1980s

Mr. Murdoch acquired The Times and The Sunday Times in Britain in 1981, controlling a bigger chunk of the British media market.

In 1985, he acquired 20th Century-Fox, a movie studio. By 1986, he had launched Fox, a broadcast network that would run shows that became TV classics, like "The Simpsons" and "The X-Files."

In 1986, Mr. Murdoch abruptly moved the offices of his British newspapers to a site where printing would be done with less labor-intensive technology. More than 5,000 printing and production workers who called a strike in protest were dismissed, in a bitter dispute seen as a turning point in the balance of power between unions and employers in Britain.

In 1987, News Corp bought Harper & Row, which would become HarperCollins in 1990 after it merged with William Collins.

1990s

In 1996, Mr. Murdoch launched the Fox News cable channel alongside Roger E. Ailes, a former media adviser for Presidents Richard M. Nixon and George H.W. Bush. Fox News became a hallmark for conservative TV commentary, bolstering the careers of hosts like Bill O'Reilly, Glenn Beck, Tucker Carlson and Megyn Kelly.

2000s

Mr. Murdoch bought Intermix media, the parent company of Myspace, for $580 million in 2005. Myspace, which struggled to keep up with other social media competitors, was sold six years later for $35 million.

In 2007, Mr. Murdoch acquired The Wall Street Journal's parent company, Dow Jones & Company, for $5 billion. After the acquisition, there was a leadership shuffle among The Journal's editorial staff, and its new owner pushed for more coverage of politics.

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NAOMI LASDON/NEWSDAY, VIA GETTY IMAGES

ALLAN TANNENBAUM/GETTY IMAGES

Rupert Murdoch, left, compiled an array of news outlets such as The Daily Mirror in 1960 and The New York Post in 1976. In 1996, he launched Fox News with Roger Ailes.

2010s

James Murdoch, one of Mr. Murdoch's sons, was named News Corp's deputy chief operating officer in 2011. That same year, he became engulfed in a phone hacking scandal that led to the shutdown of The News of the World.

In 2012, Rupert Murdoch split his newspaper business and entertainment business into two separate entities: News Corp and 20th Century Fox. He considered remerging them, but those plans were dropped this year.

In 2018, Mr. Murdoch's eldest son, Lachlan Murdoch, was named chief executive of Fox Corp, the media empire's TV arm.

The Walt Disney Company acquired most of 21st Century Fox's assets in $71.3 billion deal in 2019, taking over Mr. Murdoch's entertainment business. The remaining broadcast business now falls under new entity, Fox Corp.

2020s

James Murdoch resigned from News Corp in 2020 because of "disagreements over certain editorial content published by the Company's news outlets and certain other strategic decisions."

Rupert Murdoch was deposed in 2023 in Dominion Voting Systems' lawsuit over Fox News's coverage of allegations of fraud in the 2020 presidential election, and he acknowledged that the network had endorsed false statements. The network settled the landmark defamation case for $787.5 million in April.

In September 2023, Mr. Murdoch leaves the reins of Fox and News Corp to Lachlan Murdoch. The elder Murdoch remains chairman emeritus of both companies.

3 Promotions For Generals Get Through Senator Hold

By KAROUN DEMIRJIAN

WASHINGTON — The Senate on Thursday overwhelmingly confirmed Gen. Randy George of the Army and Gen. Eric Smith of the Marines as the chiefs of staff of their respective services, circumventing a single senator's blockade against senior military promotions but leaving hundreds more still in limbo.

The action followed the confirmation on Wednesday night of Gen. Charles Q. Brown Jr. to serve as the next chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The three moved forward after Senator Chuck Schumer, Democrat of New York and the majority leader, steered around a longstanding roadblock by Senator Tommy Tuberville, Republican of Alabama, who has halted military promotions in protest of a Pentagon policy on abortion access.

But Mr. Tuberville made it clear that he had no intention of lifting his blockade unless the Defense Department reversed its policy, which provides time off and travel reimbursement to service members needing to go long distances to obtain abortions or other forms of reproductive health care.

If anything, the confirmations seemed only to embolden Mr. Tuberville, as Mr. Schumer had long said he feared they might. The Alabama senator said the only way to get around his obstruction would be for Mr. Schumer to continue to consider the promotions one by one, a time-consuming process that Democrats and many Republicans agree is untenable.

MICHAEL REYNOLDS/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK

MARIAM ZUHAIB/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Gen. Randy George of the Army, top, and Gen. Eric Smith of the Marines, above, were confirmed on Thursday.

The developments have prompted a backlash from some Democrats, who are frustrated that Republicans have been able to hold up promotions to try to force a policy change.

"In my mind, you need to change the rules so that you can't have blanket holds anymore," said Senator Jeanne Shaheen, Democrat of New Hampshire.

But Republicans said they hoped the approval of three senior generals would help end the standoff.

"When you're working on a big, difficult issue, if you can show a little bit of progress, sometimes that can spur action to solve the broader problem," said Senator Dan Sullivan, Republican of Alaska. "I think this little breakthrough helped."

Mr. Sullivan has been one of the chief Republican figures pushing to put individual military promotions on the floor, as a means of filling vacancies without forcing Mr. Tuberville to end his protest.

But he is also working with senior Democratic senators like Jack Reed of Rhode Island, the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, to negotiate a deal to lift the blockade. In an interview on Thursday, he suggested that Mr. Tuberville might stop blocking one- and two-star generals if the Senate continued to confirm high-profile nominees as part of a negotiated compromise. He would not say whether such a deal would have to include a change to the Pentagon's policy, which Mr. Tuberville has demanded, and Democrats have rejected.

It is also unclear what the Democrats and Republicans who believe Mr. Tuberville's protest is wrong would be willing to accept as part of a negotiated deal. Mr. Schumer has not said whether he would be willing to use similar maneuvers to advance additional high-profile military promotions. And Mr. Reed said he was concerned about accommodating Mr. Tuberville's protest more than the Senate already has.

"We're in the process, if we go forward much further than this, of politicizing the military," Mr. Reed said. "They now become bargaining chips in policy wars which they have nothing to do about."

Wall Street Is Buying Up Starter Homes

By RONDA KAYSEN and ELLA KOEZE

ALVIN AND PATRICIA MAISONET bought their house in Bradfield Farms almost a decade ago. Today, newcomers are more likely to find a rental than a starter home.

TARCHIA BARBER chose to rent in Bradfield Farms because of the rural feel, but her landlord has raised the rent.

BECKY JOHNSON canvassed her neighborhood, trying to persuade homeowners to cap the number of rentals.

SHEREE HALL, whose grown daughter and son-in-law moved in with her, worries about a "corporate takeover."

PHOTOGRAPHS BY LOGAN CYRUS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

DANA HARTNESS AND JAMES M. HASTY JR. at the rental home where they live with their combined eight children.

Bradfield Farms, a community of about 1,000 houses on the outskirts of Charlotte, N.C., is no longer a place where a young, middle-income couple can easily buy a modest house for less than $200,000. Just a few years ago, it was.

Alvin Maisonet became the first person in his family to own a home — a two-story house with shade trees in the front yard in Bradfield Farms — on his 36th birthday.

For $148,500, Mr. Maisonet, a truck driver, now 44, and his wife, Patricia Maisonet, a nurse, 43, traded a frenzied life in Paterson, N.J., for generational wealth and tranquillity. Joggers waved and said hello. The grassy backyard was bucolic; Ms. Maisonet envisioned a pool. "I felt like I was a princess in the middle of my castle," she said.

Now, a newcomer is more likely to rent a house from a corporate landlord with a name like FirstKey Homes, Main Street Renewal, HomeRiver Group or Progress Residential.

Wall Street has come for the starter home.

First-time buyers, who overwhelmingly rely on mortgages, were often outmatched by cash buyers at the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, when interest rates plummeted below 3 percent and home prices soared. Across the United States, more than a third of all sales in 2022 were in cash. Many of those houses went to families and individuals, but investors paying cash accounted for nearly 10 percent of home purchases that year, according to data from ATTOM, a property data analytics company. Investor activity was even higher in fast-growing Sun Belt cities like Charlotte, Atlanta and Phoenix.

Investors were largely uninterested in wealthier enclaves. Instead, they targeted middle-income neighborhoods, many with larger Black and Latino populations. Bradfield Farms fits the bill: It is in an area that, in 2020, was 35 percent Black and 11 percent Latino, according to census data. Residents include teachers, auto shop workers, receptionists, nurses and cabinetmakers.

Over two years, from 2021 to 2022, investors snapped up properties in Bradfield Farms at roughly three times the rate of the citywide average of 17 percent, according to a New York Times analysis of ATTOM's data.

Homeowners were inundated with calls, text messages, letters and emails from people offering to buy their homes sight unseen. The buyers closed fast and used inscrutable names that ended in LLC. "Investors went hog-wild," said Kelli Enos, a local real estate agent.

Cash offers from investors are appealing. A homeowner does not have to stage the house, wait for an appraisal and inspection or watch a sale fall apart if the buyer can't get a mortgage.

Even as investors have dialed back their purchases, buyers have remained under pressure. Mortgage rates are at a 21-year high, home prices are continuing to rise in many places and inventory is anemic. "Wall Street is definitely being blamed for home price increases and rent increases, whereas, in reality, home prices and rents would have gone up because these are fast-growing areas," said Laurie Goodman, the founder of the Housing Finance Policy Center at the Urban Institute.

The single-family rental industry sees its efforts as providing a vital social benefit: People need homes to rent, and Wall Street has the deep pockets to help.

"Covid really drove demand for single-family rentals," said David Howard, the chief executive of the National Rental Home Council. "As more people worked from home and schooled their kids from home, they needed more space. They wanted the front yard. They wanted a neighborhood with sidewalks and a little community center."

A rental lowers the barrier of entry into a neighborhood. If you can't afford a down payment or don't have strong enough credit for a mortgage, a "For Rent" sign changes the equation. More Black households move into white neighborhoods when the share of rentals grows, increasing diversity, a 2021 study found. "Rentals offer an opportunity to move into these better neighborhoods," said Keith R. Ihlanfeldt, an economics professor at Florida State University and an author of the study.

But advocates of affordable housing argue that the proliferation of single-family rentals traps would-be buyers.

"It's a thing of scale — they're reaching near monopoly in some places," said Madeline Bankson, a housing research coordinator at the nonprofit Private Equity Stakeholder Project. "They're shutting people out of the home-buying process."

For most Americans, their home is their largest investment and their primary source of generational wealth. Yet only 46 percent of Black households and 49 percent of Latino households own a home, both well below the national average of 66 percent.

"They say they can rent you the American dream, but I know hundreds of people who don't want to rent — they want to own," said Jessica Moreno, a community organizer at Action NC, a tenant organization in Charlotte.

The Renters

Tarchia Barber liked the rural feel of Bradfield Farms, with cul-de-sacs and shady streets surrounded by farmland and woods. "I'm a country girl," she said, standing on her lawn one steamy afternoon, a "Home Sweet Home" sign on her walkway and bags of fresh mulch in the flower beds. When Ms. Barber moved into the house in December 2021, her neighbors left cookies, cards and flowers on her doorstep. When a neighbor cleaned her gutters unprompted, she thanked him with a cheesecake.

But her landlord, Progress Residential, has been slow to make repairs, Ms. Barber said. "My last landlord addressed problems within 24 hours," she said. "He didn't go through a property management company. He'd come and look at it in the day."

By contrast, she has waited five or six days for a Progress technician to arrive after submitting work orders for repairs to a blocked dryer vent and a leaking shower. Nikki Sloup, a Progress Residential spokeswoman, said in an email that the company "responded to and completed all work orders" with multiple technicians.

When Ms. Barber renewed her lease last year, Progress increased her rent by 11 percent, to $1,876 a month, an amount Ms. Sloup described as "below market rates."

What would have happened if a person, instead of a corporation, had bought the three-bedroom house for $300,000 in 2021? With a modest 3.5 percent down payment on a 30-year loan, the homeowner would now be paying roughly $1,200 a month in interest and principal, given the mortgage rates at that time. While homeowners are responsible for utilities, property taxes, repairs and association fees, they also build equity over time.

The Homeowners

A decade ago, Becky Johnson, 71, didn't know of any rentals on her street. Now, 41 percent of the homes there are corporate-owned, single-family rentals. Ms. Johnson, a retired computer security worker whose olive green house has an American flag flying on the garage door and a "Thank You, Jesus" sign on the walkway, went door to door in the North Carolina heat in the summer of 2022, urging her neighbors to vote to cap the number of rentals at 25 percent of the homes in the community, and to require homeowners to live in their home for a year before renting it.

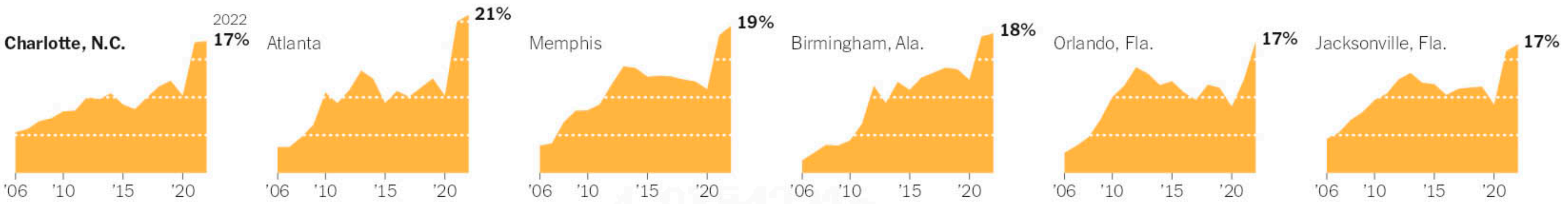
The homeowners association needs a two-thirds supermajority to amend its bylaws. Once investors own more than a third of the homes, reaching the voting threshold could prove impossible. Lenders are often hesitant to underwrite mortgages in communities with a large share of investor-owned properties, potentially making it harder to sell. They worry that a neighborhood "could enter a self-reinforcing downward spiral if all the investors head for the exit at the same time or default en masse," said Greg McBride, the chief financial analyst for Bankrate.com.

Sheree Hall, 52, a homemaker, can-

Susan C. Beachy contributed research.

Investors With Cash Went on a Home-Buying Spree In Several Cities

Share of homes bought with all cash by investors in metropolitan areas



Source: ATTOM | Note: Cities shown are those in the top 50 most populous metropolitan areas where the share of homes bought by investors with all cash increased by at least five percentage points from 2020 to 2022.

How Investors Bought Up One Block

Roughly a third of the homes on one block of Bradfield Farms, a subdivision in Charlotte, N.C., sold in 2021 and 2022. All but one were bought in all-cash deals by investors, who now rent them out. Across Bradfield Farms, 50 percent of the homes that sold were bought by investors who paid in cash, as first-time buyers struggled to get a foothold.

Methodology

Home sales data come from ATTOM, a property data analytics company that collects and consolidates property data from across the country. Home sales include single-family houses, condos and townhouses. Investors are any buyers that are companies, LLCs, corporations and other entities. They do not include personal trusts; however, LLCs used to purchase houses on behalf of individuals would appear as investors in the data. All city-level statistics are based on metropolitan statistical areas (MSA) and are geographically larger than a city's official limits. Within the Charlotte MSA, large investors are defined as investors who made at least 11 purchases in that area in 2021 and 2022. Aerial imagery of Bradfield Farms is from the National Agriculture Imagery Program via the U.S. Geological Survey's EarthExplorer. The image was taken in July 2020. Bradfield Farms' borders are from the Bradfield Farms Homeowners Association's governing documents. Other map data comes from the U.S. Census Bureau and Mecklenburg County. Bradfield Farms demographic data is from the 2020 decennial census for the census block group that contains the neighborhood.

ELLA KOEZE AND GUILBERT GATES/THE NEW YORK TIMES

vassed the neighborhood with Ms. Johnson. "We weren't going to sit back and let the corporate takeover of our neighborhood happen," she said. "We had to stop it."

A few homeowners, including the Maisonets from New Jersey, balked at the proposal. "It's horrible. You should be able to rent your home to whoever you want," said Mr. Maisonet, who felt pressured by the door-knocking campaign. "It smelled fishy."

In April, the amendment passed.

Too Big to Roll Back

Large, national single-family rental companies were born of the 2008 foreclosure crisis, plucking up distressed properties in the nation's hardest-hit communities. During the pandemic-era housing market, these companies saw their profits soar as rents increased by double-digit percentages and home prices rose at their fastest clip in U.S. history. In Bradfield Farms, the average home price jumped 48 percent, to $374,165, from January 2021 to January 2023, according to Brandon Little, a real estate broker with Keller Williams.

Nationwide, institutional investors own 3.8 percent of the country's 15.1 million single-family rentals, but in Charlotte, they own 20 percent, according to an April report by the Urban Institute.

Their presence has professionalized a mom-and-pop sector. "We've had the emergence of an industry," said Jade Rahmani, a real estate finance analyst at Keefe, Bruyette & Woods. "It's become more institutionalized."

Wall Street investors turned the single-family rental home into a powerful investment tool by bundling multiple purchases into portfolios available for investment. Among the investors are pension funds and mutual funds, which "see it as a good bet," Mr. Rahmani said.

"They want exposure to the U.S. housing market. They think these homes are going to be worth more in the future," he added. "And they like the income."

When Ms. Enos, 62, the real estate agent, sold her Bradfield Farms home two years ago, she was adamant that she would not sell to an investor.

For years, her brother lived on the same block. Their children and dogs roamed the streets. As she watched clients jump at anonymous cash offers, she worried that the neighborhood would become transitory. Who would organize the block party if no one lived on the block for long? She sold her house to a neighbor, not an investor.

Yet, she owns stock in Invitation Homes, the country's largest owner of single-family rentals. "I would be silly if I didn't," she said. "I make really good money from it."

Homeowner vs. Renter

Ms. Johnson pointed out homes that, to her, did not meet the neighborhood's standards. One, painted a bright blue, seemed garish. A beige one felt dull. She suspected the ones with overgrown grass or dirty siding were rentals. "We love our neighborhood and want it to stay the same way it was," she said.

On a neighborhood Facebook group, renters are blamed for trash and furniture left on the curb, loud music and domestic disputes. Members fret that home values might fall.

Lisa Damas, 58, installed cameras around her property, and Kasey and Jim Sylvester sold their house last year to a couple in part because the neighborhood felt as if it had deteriorated. "The whole vibe was switching," said Ms. Sylvester, 38, a stay-at-home mother. "There were groups of teenagers giving me attitude."

However, reports of crimes — burglaries, thefts, assaults, weapons violations, vandalism and drugs — dropped to 31 in 2022, from 40 in 2020, according to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department.

Ms. Maisonet does not understand the animosity toward renters, whom she sees as good neighbors — she's watched their children grow, just as she did the owners'. "I don't know if it's prejudice," said Ms. Maisonet, who is originally from Peru. "I think it's just fear. Most likely they're acting out of fear that something can go wrong."

Some renters say they feel attacked from all sides: Landlords raise rents and slow-walk repairs; homeowners blame them for neighborhood ills.

Dana Hartness, 44, who works in corporate travel, once owned a home here. Now she rents a three-bedroom house blocks from the one where her former husband still lives. She chose it partly because of its fenced-in yard — an amenity touted by corporate landlords.

She and her husband, James M. Hasty Jr., 48, a cabinetmaker, put a trampoline in their yard, where their combined eight children play. But last spring, their landlord, Progress Residential, took down the fence because its style did not fully comply with homeowners association rules.

There have been other problems, like a broken refrigerator and air-conditioner.

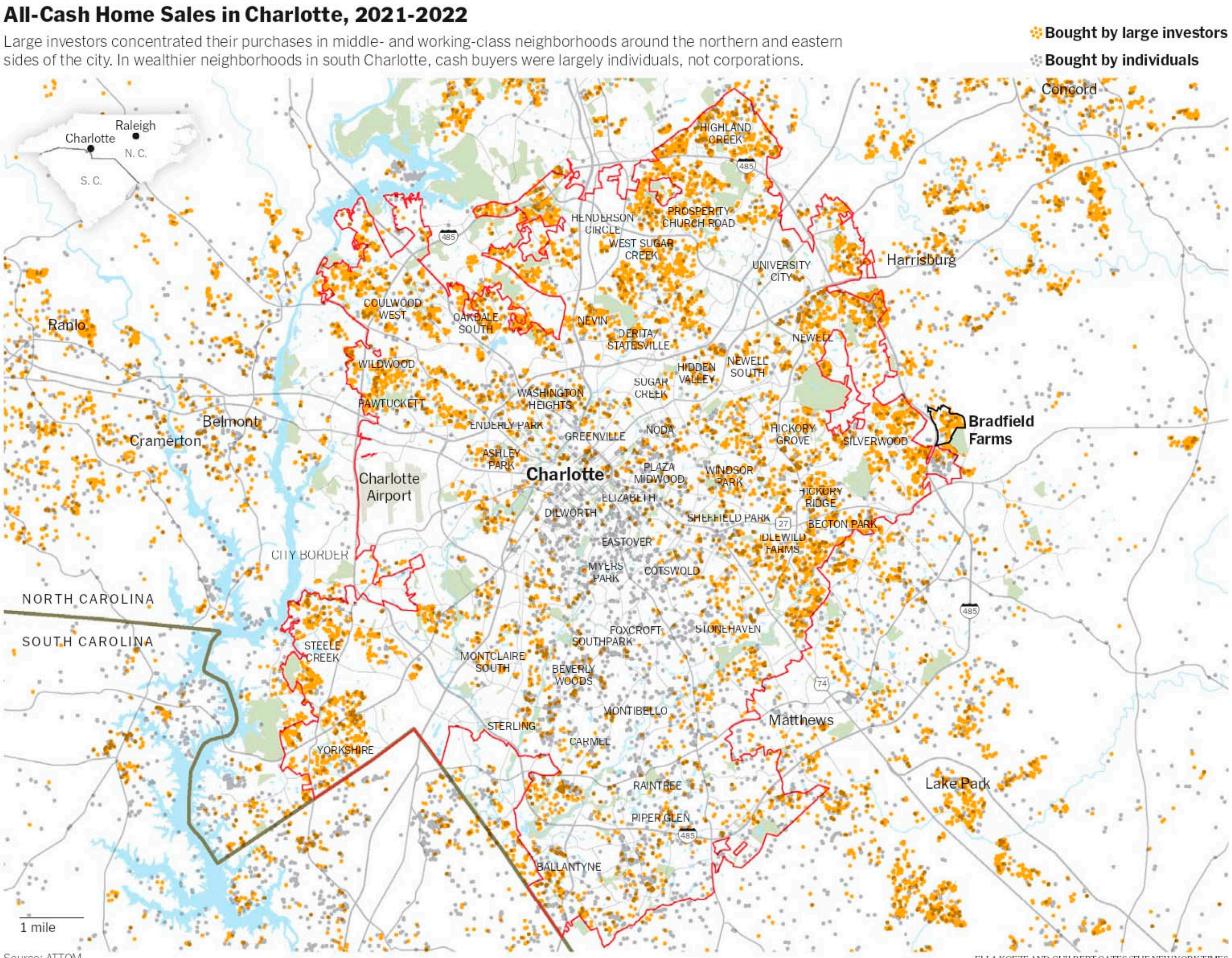
Yet, Ms. Hartness is grateful that the school bus drops off her children out front, and they can roam the neighborhood, with hiking and biking trails nearby.

She's disappointed by homeowners who she thinks "want to push people to buy when it's not as feasible as it once was."

"It is really difficult for people in my age bracket to buy a house right now," she said. "But we also would like a family-type community."

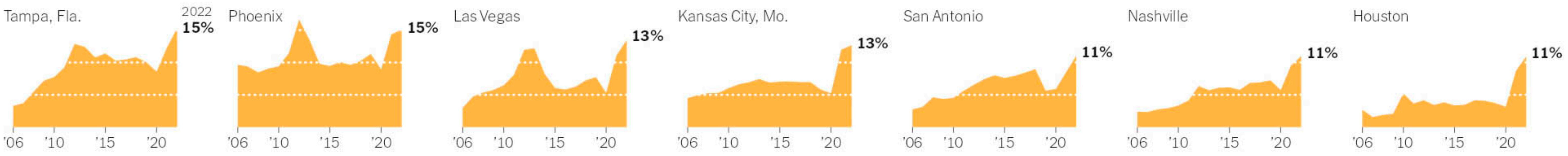
All-Cash Home Sales in Charlotte, 2021-2022

Large investors concentrated their purchases in middle- and working-class neighborhoods around the northern and eastern sides of the city. In wealthier neighborhoods in south Charlotte, cash buyers were largely individuals, not corporations.



Source: ATTOM

ELLA KOEZE AND GUILBERT GATES/THE NEW YORK TIMES



ELLA KOEZE/THE NEW YORK TIMES

With Work Permits, Biden Offers Step Toward Easing Migrant Crisis

From Page A1

and his Republican opponent in the 2024 campaign next year.

"The president is terribly compromising this country, has done irreparable harm to the country with the border invasion he has allowed," Representative Bob Good, Republican of Virginia, said on CNN on Thursday.

The administration's decision to expand Temporary Protected Status to an additional 472,000 Venezuelans in the United States is in line with previous moves by the administration to extend protections to some migrants from other countries. But it comes more than a year after Mr. Biden rejected similar pleas from immigration advocates to broaden its T.P.S. program for the Venezuelan migrants.

What changed, say people who engaged in the concerted effort to convince the administration to act, is the pressure campaign from members of the president's own party.

"The images of migrants sleeping on the streets of New York City and strong, concerning statements from the Democratic mayor and other leaders highlighted the urgency for federal action," said Krish Vignarajah, president of the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service.

The T.P.S. law has been used for decades to provide limited legal status to people who have tried to escape natural disasters or political violence. It is designed to be a temporary refuge — usually 18 months — for people who cannot be sent home because the crisis there is ongoing. But presidents in both parties have regularly extended T.P.S. for certain groups, some of whom have remained in the United States for decades.

As of March 31, 2023, there are 16 countries whose citizens have been given T.P.S. designation, according to the Congressional Research Service: Afghanistan, Burma, Cameroon, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Haiti, Honduras, Nepal, Nicaragua, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Ukraine, Venezuela and Yemen.

"This redesignation and extension of Venezuela for T.P.S. is based on extraordinary and temporary conditions in Venezuela that prevent their nationals from returning in safety," said Naree Ketudat, an spokeswoman at the Department of Homeland Security. "D.H.S. is doing everything in its power to get the migrants who are eligible working."

Critics of the program have argued that the designations were being renewed so frequently that they no longer fit the definition of "temporary." President Donald J. Trump sought to end T.P.S. protections for people from El Salvador, Honduras, Haiti, Nicaragua, Sudan and send them back to countries many had not seen in years. The effort was led by Stephen Miller, the architect of Mr. Trump's immigration agenda.

On Thursday, Mr. Miller lashed out at Mr. Biden's decision this week to expand T.P.S. for Venezuelans.

"By granting amnesty to the very illegals he's escorting across the border, he will ensure the even more rapid emptying and relocation of the developing world into the United States," Mr. Miller said. "It is the complete resettlement of America without the consent of the American people."

Biden administration officials and advocates for migrants reject Mr. Miller's philosophy, as do Democratic officials across the country. But the mayors and governors arguing for action over the last several months have been focused on a more pragmatic issue: how to pay to support the vast number of migrants settling in their communities.

The Biden administration has distributed close to $770 million in grants to localities, including about $140 million to New York, to bolster services for the migrants. The administration has asked Congress for another $600 million in supplemental funding for this year, and $800 million for next year.

But local officials have said they need more.

Gov. Kathy Hochul of New York, a Democrat, is in daily contact with top advisers at the White House about the issue, including Tom Perez, the president's top liaison to other political leaders, according to one of the governor's aides. On June 9, during a meeting on the issue in Washington with Jeffrey D. Zients, the White House chief of staff, Ms. Hochul spoke to Mr. Biden on the phone.

DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Finding solutions for dealing with the border is sure to be debated between President Biden and his G.O.P. opponent next year.

"She spoke to her and she made our set of asks, which included T.P.S. for Venezuelans back then," said Avi Small, a spokesman for Ms. Hochul. "So you know, we've been doing our own inside game really hard."

A person familiar with Ms. Hochul's efforts said she helped arrange a letter from New York business groups; deployed top labor leaders to speak with White House aides; and enlisted Hillary Clinton, the former New York senator who has her own contacts inside the administration, to make the case.

Senator Chuck Schumer and Representative Hakeem Jeffries, both from New York and the top Democrats in their chambers, also worked the issue. In a joint statement on Thursday, the pair called the decision "a welcome step forward."

The call for help came from across the country.

In August, Gov. Maura T. Healey of Massachusetts, a Democrat, declared a state of emergency, citing the cost of shelter for more than 20,000 people, including migrants, who were living in the state's shelters. Gov. J.B. Pritzker of Illinois and Mayor Brandon Johnson of Chicago, also Democrats, called on the Biden administration to do more.

Ms. Hochul and Mayor Eric Adams, a Democrat, began to escalate their calls for the Biden administration to expand T.P.S. this spring, as the migrant crisis in New York City hit a tipping point that prompted the mayor to bus migrants from the city to upstate communities, sparking a backlash.

In March, Mr. Adams released a 25-page blueprint that vaguely called on the federal government to implement "an expedited right-to-work policy for asylum seekers." By April, as the situation worsened, his requests had gotten more specific: He began asking that the federal government redesignate and extend T.P.S. not only for Venezuela, but also a slew of other Latin American and African countries.

The mayor, increasingly frustrated by the burden of the situation on the city's coffers and shelter system, also began sharpening his criticism of the Biden administration, calling the migrant crisis "a national problem dropped on the lap of a city."

As Mr. Adams ratcheted up his attacks on the White House (in speeches, television interviews, rallies), souring his relationship with the president, Ms. Hochul maneuvered more carefully, staying largely above the fray. Over the summer, the governor took pains to avoid overtly criticizing Mr. Biden and instead focused on pushing the White House for more help through back channels.

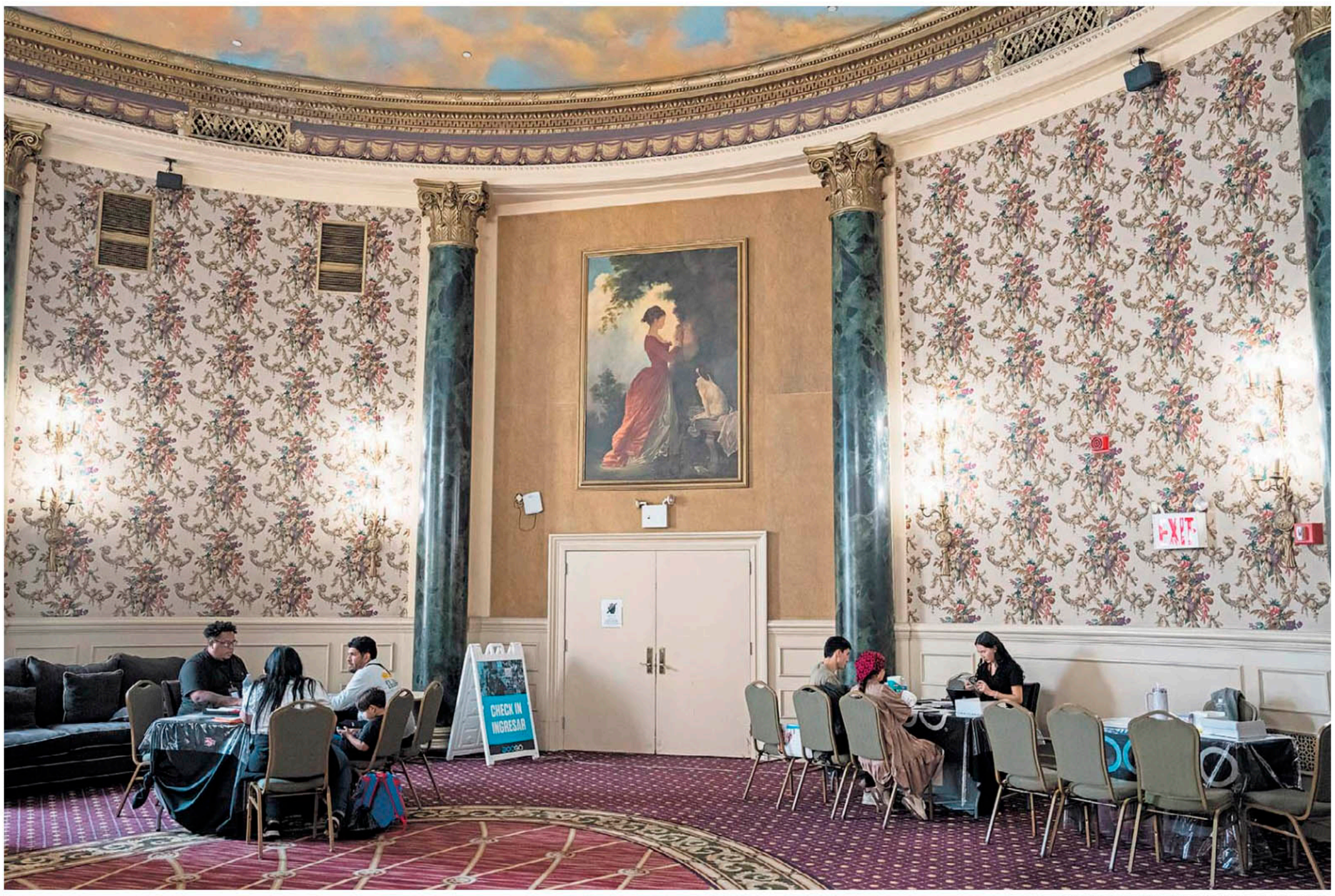
But Ms. Hochul sharply shifted gears in late August when, under pressure to take a more active role, she delivered a rare address in Albany in which she laid the blame of the crisis at the door of the White House, saying, "We've managed thus far without substantive support from Washington."

In an interview on CNN, the governor said the president shared the news this week that his administration would expand T.P.S. for Venezuelans during a glitzy reception at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in Manhattan.

"The president tipped me off and said, 'You've been heard, I understand,'" she said.

The Hotel That Has Become the Ellis Island for Thousands of Arriving Migrants

By JOSEPH GOLDSTEIN and TODD HEISLER



PHOTOGRAPHS BY TODD HEISLER/THE NEW YORK TIMES

The lobby of the Roosevelt Hotel has been transformed into a processing center for migrants. Many will stay at the hotel or in other makeshift shelters around the city.

Inside a once grand but long-faded hotel in midtown Manhattan, dozens of immigrants huddle together beneath large chandeliers as they wait hours to be processed. They give their information — where they've come from, and their ultimate destination — and they strip down for a medical examination. They rest and hold their children tight.

But at the Roosevelt Hotel, New York's new Ellis Island, as one city official called it, there is no view of the Statue of Liberty, only the Men's Wearhouse across the street. And there is no giant American flag to greet immigrants, as there was in Ellis Island's Great Hall. Instead there is a smiling portrait of Guy Lombardo, the once-famous bandleader who led the hotel's house band, watching over everyone.

The Roosevelt — where Dewey conceded to Truman in 1948 — has become a symbol of the huge scale of the migrant crisis and a faltering government response.

In May, New York City began directing new immigrants to the hotel's lobby, where they register with city officials upon arriving in town.

By July, the doors closed for several nights, leaving immigrants to sleep on the sidewalk outside the hotel. The city could not keep up with their surging numbers.

Dr. Ted Long, a public health official who is helping lead the city's response to the migrant crisis, said he believes the Roosevelt Hotel is, ultimately, a hopeful symbol.

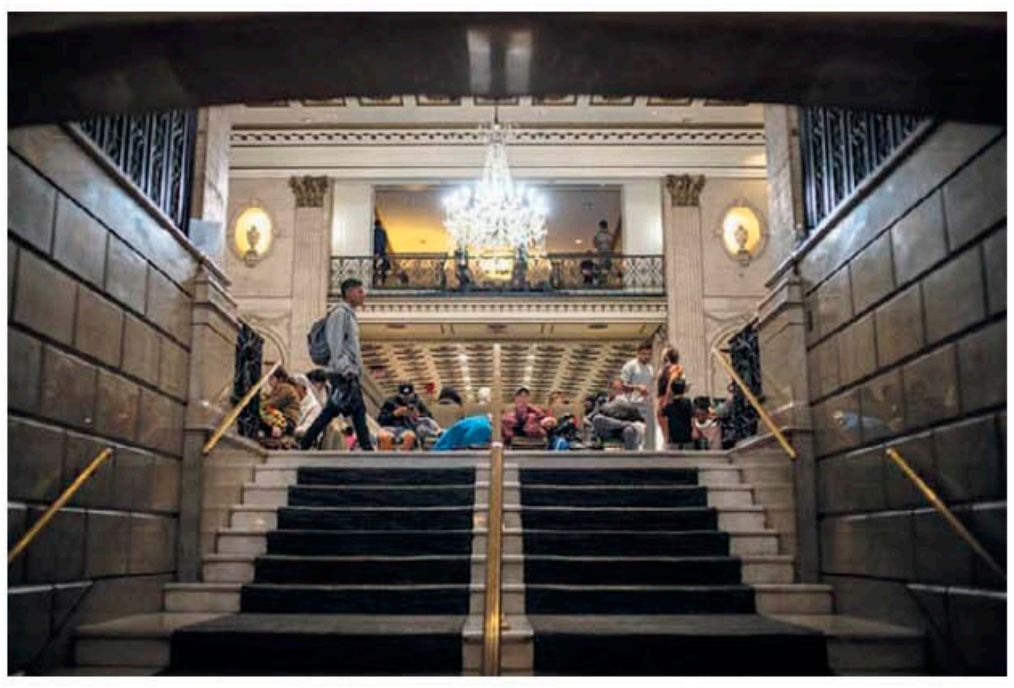
"We're creating a new Ellis Island for New York City," he said Wednesday afternoon after a new batch of migrants arrived: a Syrian man with a backward ball cap and a red roller suitcase, a family of four from Angola, a Venezuelan couple debating whether to stay in New York or find their way to Washington State, and dozens of others.

But Mayor Eric Adams has sought to curtail who can come and stay in the care of the city, which has a unique legal obligation to provide shelter to any homeless person who asks for a bed. Officials believe this has become a draw to some migrants arriving in the country with nowhere to go, and limiting that right has become part of a broader campaign by city and state officials to respond to the influx.

In an interview on CNN on Wednesday evening, Gov. Kathy Hochul discussed one victory: A decision by the Biden administration to allow thousands of Venezuelans, the biggest group of newcomers in New York, to stay and work legally. She also said that she agreed with the mayor's goals to restrict the right-to-shelter guarantee.

"We don't have capacity," Ms. Hochul said in the interview, adding, "Never was it envisioned that this would be an unlimited, universal right or obligation on the city to have to house literally the entire world."

Officials have been reluctant to let reporters into the hotel, but on Wednesday, Dr. Long offered a limited tour. In the stale, warm air of the lobby, scores of immigrants waited for hours before receiving a bed assignment, either upstairs in one of the hotel's 850 available rooms or at shelters — some without showers — spread across the city.



Left, Kelvis Jose Marquez, with his daughter, Keiliani, stopped in New York City after coming from Venezuela but said he plans to move on to Washington State. Above, migrants waiting under the chandelier of the old hotel, which has 850 available rooms.

Young children, exhausted by their long journey — days for some, weeks for others — lay in their parents' laps, sleeping or staring up at the shimmering lights overhead.

Like Ellis Island, the immigrant station in New York Harbor through which some 12 million people passed before its closure in 1954, the Roosevelt Hotel is becoming the gate through which the newest New Yorkers enter the city.

There are plenty of differences. The most obvious one is scale: The number of migrants processed at the Roosevelt is in the thousands.

And while Ellis Island was run by the federal government, the operation at the Roosevelt Hotel is run by the city, and staffed by contractors.

Immigrants pass through what was once known as the Palm Room, with a sky mural on the ceiling, and into a large banquet hall for their medical exam. There they are screened for a range of illnesses, from tuberculosis to depression, and asked to disrobe behind a series of dividers for a full-body skin exam.

Clinicians with a medical contracting firm, DocGo, examine them for measles or chickenpox. On Wednesday afternoon, a Venezuelan woman waited nearby with her daughter and son, who were about to receive the M.M.R. vaccine. The girl, scowling, seemed to be deciding whether to protest or not. Her younger brother held a SpongeBob SquarePants balloon.

Nearby an Uzbek woman with a stoic expression gently rocked her sleeping baby, just 3 days old. Her husband, Komiljon Doniyorov, 31, stood by them, beaming with pride at anyone who glanced in his direction. "My first," he said. "This is my son."

Few people were eager to catch his eye. Families kept to themselves. This far into their journey, children said little, remaining silent. Their parents tended to discuss matters quietly.

One Venezuelan family had faced a big decision. There was a sister here in New York. But another relative who lived clear across the country in Washington State had offered them farm work, if they could make it. The city told them it would pay for a plane, train or bus ticket.

At a table by the hotel's bar, a group of contractors helped migrants book travel. On the stained glass, someone had taped a sheet of paper with a mildly reassuring quote: "Everything is going to be alright, maybe not today but eventually."

The family decided to head west.

Dr. Long said that about a quarter of new arrivals left for somewhere else in the country within 24 hours of arriving to New York, often to find relatives, friends, or better prospects.

But hundreds of those who arrive each day decide to stay in New York. Families are booked in rooms, at the Roosevelt or elsewhere. But at 5 p.m., many of the single men who had been waiting in the lobby were told to line up. They filed out of the hotel and onto another bus.

New York Weighs Impact of New Protections for Venezuelan Migrants

By NICHOLAS FANDOS

The Biden administration's decision to grant special status to Venezuelan migrants will have no greater impact than in New York City, where thousands of immigrants will soon be eligible to begin legally applying for work and eventually move out of taxpayer-funded shelters.

Mayor Eric Adams and Gov. Kathy Hochul, both Democrats, cast the move as a badly needed reprieve, saying on Thursday that it could help some of the 60,000 migrants in city care move to independent housing more quickly. The policy could also help ensure that other Venezuelans never need the shelters.

Yet even as they celebrated a policy shift after months of intensely lobbying the White House, top New York officials, immigration experts and shelter operators labored to figure out the practical and political impact of a decision many thought President Biden would never make.

Some conceded that it would do little to defray the larger crisis confronting the nation's largest city — and could eventually worsen it by encouraging more people to immigrate.

"There was a clear call coming from New York City on work authorization, and I want to thank the White House on hearing us," Mr. Adams said on Thursday, before adding a more downbeat note. He said 10,000 migrants were arriving in the city every month, "and a substantial number are still in our care today."

In its announcement late Wednesday, the Homeland Security Department said it planned to grant special status to 472,000 Venezuelans who arrived in the country before July 31, protecting them from removal for 18 months and waiving a monthslong waiting period for them to seek employment authorization.

The administration had already extended special protections to close to 250,000 Venezuelans who had arrived in the country before March 2021, as well as to thousands of others from Ukraine, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua and other countries. On Thursday, Homeland Security announced that it would extend protections to Afghan immigrants.

The program does not provide a permanent path to legal residence, but has been used by presidents in both parties to grant humanitarian protections to migrants fleeing wars, natural disasters and other violence. The Biden administration said that Venezuelans, who constitute one of the largest sources of migration, fit that description.

Reporting was contributed by Mihir Zaveri, Stefanos Chen and Zeke Minaya.

JEENAH MOON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Mayor Eric Adams at a rally for asylum seekers last month. He called the Biden administration's policy shift a much-needed reprieve.

Venezuelans are also the largest group of the more than 110,000 migrants who have arrived in New York City since spring 2022. But estimates of just how many of those migrants were still in the city fluctuated on Thursday.

Asher Ross, a senior strategist for New York Immigration Coalition Action, said that between 40,000 and 50,000 Venezuelans of working age in the city may qualify for the protections. Mayor Adams and a senior New York homeland security official each said that the number living in shelters was probably smaller, between 10,000 and 20,000.

"If it has bite, that bite will take time to take effect," said Muzaffar Chishti, a senior fellow with the nonpartisan Migration Policy Institute, predicting the city could even see a short-term bump in migrants seeking shelter. "So New York City still has to be prepared to deal with the housing crisis."

Elsewhere, there were fierce pockets of opposition to the policy. New York Republicans argued that it would only encourage more Venezuelans and migrants of other nationalities to attempt the arduous journey to cross the border, and warned that the crisis in the country would only worsen until Mr. Biden and Democrats in Congress agree to tougher border policies.

"The president is unwilling either by default or design to confront the crisis at the border — and, this will only make matters worse," said Representative Marc Molinaro, a moderate Republican from the Hudson Valley.

Democrats in power here and in Washington are increasingly nervous that Republicans like Mr. Molinaro could tap into a vein of unease in next year's elections among voters who might be open to immigration but believe Democrats are bungling the response to the present crush of new arrivals.

News of the new policy spread quickly among Venezuelan migrants on social media. In interviews, many described feelings of relief after months — or longer — living in the shadows, but said they had little information about how to legally claim their new status.

"We've been living in fear, and it takes it away," said Julio Cesar Gonzales, who crossed into the United States with his family in July after journeying for weeks from Caracas. "The fear of not having work, of not eating, of our kids not going to school."

Mr. Gonzales, 49, said he learned of the new policy on Instagram Thursday morning. He was living in a shelter in Queens with his wife and three young children. With the economy in Venezuela in tatters, he said his family had often gone without food because he could not make ends meet as a taxi driver.

"We are now here legal; we can work and get our kids in school, God willing," he said.

Government officials who will be responsible for administering the policy said it would not be that simple. Migrants will still have to formally apply for temporary protected status. But instead of waiting half a year to file a separate application for work authorization like other asylum seekers, eligible Venezuelans will be able to do so immediately.

The state also plans to begin offering immediate career counseling to those who are eligible and has secured pledges from businesses who are willing to hire workers and delay their start dates until the permits are approved. But others warned of bureaucratic backups that could slow the process, not to mention the challenges even the most successful migrants might face finding housing in a city suffering through an affordability crunch.

"This isn't a magic wand from Washington that gets bestowed upon you, if you show up from Venezuela," said Christine Quinn, the president and chief executive of Win, the largest provider of shelters to homeless families with children in the city.

Still, she called it a "game changer" for families ground down by life in shelters.

On Thursday, the mayor and the governor said they would keep pressuring Mr. Biden to help secure funds from Congress to reimburse the city for migrant care and find new ways to accelerate the work authorization process

AHMED GABER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

"We've been living in fear, and it takes it away," Julio Cesar Gonzales, a migrant in New York, said of a new work policy.

for those not eligible for temporary protected status.

Mr. Adams, in particular, has been warning for weeks that the issue could "destroy" New York City without drastic federal intervention at the border and help to move migrants into legal jobs more quickly. His administration has estimated that its response efforts could cost the city $12 billion over three years, and has already used those figures to justify budget cuts.

But Ms. Hochul, who has opened the state's arms to migrants, has begun to shift toward a more nuanced tone, discouraging migrants from choosing New York as a destination.

"I will not look a gift horse in the mouth," Ms. Hochul said on Spectrum NY1. "This is an important first step, and to others that we have to let people know, if you're thinking of coming to New York, we are truly out of space."

She also indicated greater openness to taking more drastic measures at home. Right now, New York City is providing free shelter to every migrant who asks for it as part of a decades-old "right-to-shelter" legal mandate.

In an interview late Wednesday on CNN, Ms. Hochul said she agreed with Mr. Adams that it ought to be suspended or altered, a step that would meet fierce resistance from advocacy groups for the homeless and immigrants.

"Never was it envisioned that this would be an unlimited universal right or obligation on the city to have to house literally the entire world," she said. "We have to let the word out that when you come to New York, we're not going to have more hotel rooms."

City Development Plan Could Lead to Construction of 100,000 New Homes

By MIHIR ZAVERI

Mayor Eric Adams proposed on Thursday a major overhaul of New York City's approach to development that his administration says could make way for as many as 100,000 additional homes in the coming years and ease the city's severe housing crisis.

The proposed reforms, which Mr. Adams announced in remarks at Borough of Manhattan Community College, amount to his administration's broadest and most ambitious attempt to tackle New York City's housing shortage, which has been worsening for decades.

Rules limiting growth have long made it difficult for enough homes to be built to accommodate everyone who wants to live here, driving up the cost of living. That, in turn, has raised a threat to the city's economy as businesses struggle to keep workers and families have poured out of the city.

The proposals could bring new housing development to nearly every corner of New York City and reflect a growing political consensus that the city must do everything it can to build.

In particular, the extreme shortage of lower-cost housing has come into sharp relief in the past year as more than 110,000 migrants have arrived in New York City since spring 2022, and more than half of them have landed in homeless shelters.

"We cannot have a city where the shelter system is how we are defined," Mr. Adams said in his speech. "We must put people in housing."

One proposal would allow the construction of apartment buildings up to five stories tall on top of laundromats, bodegas and other single-story commercial buildings — a type of development prevented by zoning rules in some neighborhoods outside Manhattan. Another would undo rules that prevent similar types of development around some transit stations.

Mr. Adams is proposing making it easier for owners of one- and two- family homes to turn basements, attics or backyard garages into apartments.

He also wants to eliminate mandates that certain new residential buildings include space for parking — a requirement that has made some housing construction impossible for developers.

Yet another proposal would let developers build larger buildings if they include affordable homes in their projects. The plan would also ease conversions of offices to apartments by making more buildings eligible and allow for smaller apartment sizes than are currently legal.

Many housing advocates and experts had called on Mr. Adams to make good on a campaign promise to push more development across the city — particularly in wealthy neighborhoods, like the Upper East Side of Manhattan, that have been effective at resisting change but may have better access to transit, jobs and schools.

City officials said the proposals were designed to be broad but also not so aggressive that they provoked backlash: They must be approved by the City Council, and a vote could come as early as next fall.

Broad changes that lift or reduce building restrictions.

Adrienne Adams, the Council speaker, called Mr. Adams's proposals "encouraging and thoughtful" but did not give a full endorsement.

She said the Council looked forward to "continuing discussions with the administration and all stakeholders throughout this process to successfully advance the city's housing needs."

Over the next few months, the administration will seek to win the support of community boards and other neighborhood leaders, which may not be easy to get.

Local politicians and activists have regularly opposed development proposals, including a recent 231-unit project in Midwood and a more than 900-unit building in Harlem.

Mr. Adams acknowledged in his speech on Thursday the likelihood of resistance, saying "everyone is concerned about the impacts on parking, transit and traffic."

"What we are proposing would benefit virtually every neighborhood and every New Yorker," he said.

At the same time, the proposals will likely be welcomed by developers, because they address complaints about how frustrating it can be to navigate city rules and politics. But they could bring scrutiny to the mayor's ties to the real estate industry, which have been a talking point of Mr. Adams's critics in the past.

Danny Pearlstein, a spokesman for the Riders Alliance, a transit advocacy group, said the proposals emphasized the need for the mayor to improve a bus system that is already strained. He said many of New York City's lower-cost neighborhoods were not near subway stations.

"If Mayor Adams wants to build a lot more housing, he'll need to meet the needs of riders as well as real estate," he said.

The proposals would not immediately help lower-income New Yorkers struggling to afford housing or the thousands of migrants who need homes.

In some cases, the state legislature would also likely need to pass bills to support the city's goals, through programs like new tax incentives. That may not be easy. Gov. Kathy Hochul's own ambitious housing proposals died in the state legislature this year amid pushback from suburban officials who resisted mandates to allow more housing to be built.

Still, if they succeed, city officials said they believed the changes to the rules governing development would be the most significant in half a century, and could make New York City a model for other cities nationwide.

Annemarie Gray, the executive director of Open New York, a nonprofit that advocates for building more housing, welcomed Mr. Adams's proposals but said her group would "be paying close attention as the public process moves forward to ensure that the proposed changes are as ambitious as possible."

Raju Mann, a former director of land use and planning for the City Council, said the proposals were overdue and were a big and potentially transformative for development in the city.

Mr. Mann, now an associate principal at the development firm Arup, said housing development was often bogged down by negotiations over individual projects or about particular neighborhoods.

"What's unique here is that he's saying it has to be a citywide thing in order to work," he said.

But he said the state would also need to pass measures, like a tax incentive for affordable housing development, for the city's plan to reach its potential. He said the mayor's push would hopefully signal to legislators in Albany that the need is urgent.

"I think resetting the tone on these things is important," he said.

The proposals come at a critical juncture for Mr. Adams, who has been criticized for not doing enough to tackle the city's housing crisis as rents rose sharply in recent months and homelessness increased.

The median rent on new leases in Manhattan in August, according to the brokerage Douglas Elliman, was $4,400 — almost 26 percent above prepandemic levels.

The Citizens Budget Commission, a nonprofit watchdog organization, found the rate of new housing construction had remained stagnant in recent decades, despite job and population growth. New York City has issued fewer building permits per resident over most of the past decade than Boston, Austin and San Francisco, according to the group.

Eviction filings are on the rise, particularly in affordable housing, as landlords seek to recoup unpaid rent as people continue to struggle with the economic challenges of the pandemic. Mr. Adams's housing chief resigned earlier this year.

Democratic Leaders Praise Migrant Work Permits, but Will It Draw More From Venezuela?

By ANDY NEWMAN

Is it a case of a wish come true or "be careful what you wish for"?

The news that the Biden administration would grant work permits to hundreds of thousands of Venezuelan migrants who had already entered the United States was welcomed by Democratic leaders from cities overwhelmed with a large influx of migrants unable to work legally.

The hope is that the move will let many Venezuelans make enough money to move out of shelters, where the cost of housing them is straining big cities, especially New York. But could it end up backfiring by attracting even more Venezuelan migrants to cross the border?

The work authorization extends temporary protected status, known as T.P.S., to more than 400,000 Venezuelans who have entered the country since March 2021 and were on American soil by July 31 of this year. Alejandro Mayorkas, the homeland security secretary, warned that anyone who arrived after that would be "removed when they are found to not have a legal basis to stay."

Julia Gelatt, the associate director of the U.S. immigration policy program at the Migration Policy Institute, a nonpartisan research center, said research hasn'tt established a clear link between temporary protected status and increased migration. The specifics of American immigration policy, she said, are a minor factor in inducing someone to flee their country.

She said of Venezuelans, "They know that in the U.S. there is safety and economic opportunity, and whether they are a parolee" — someone who has been granted humanitarian parole — "a T.P.S. recipient, or an asylum seeker may not be as important as the difference in opportunities overall available in the U.S., compared to where they're living now."

Ms. Gelatt noted that the route that most Venezuelans take to reach the United States — crossing the treacherous stretch of jungle known as the Darién Gap and up through Central America and Mexico — requires a journey of months and that any possible effect from the extension of the temporary work authorization would not be apparent for a while.

But several Venezuelans in New York said they thought that word of the work-authorization extension would bring more of their countrymen here.

"For sure, people will come to the U.S.," said Ely Johanna Carrascal, 32, who owned a small business in San Cristobal, Venezuela, and who works in a restaurant. "There are already people waiting on the borders, and they will continue to come," she added. "You can't live in Venezuela."

Zeke Minaya and Eduardo Salazar Uribe contributed reporting.

EDUARDO SALAZAR URIBE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Ely Johanna Carrascal, 32, of San Cristobal, Venezuela, near Grand Central in Manhattan. "You can't live in Venezuela," she said.

Yordano Negren, 28, a hair stylist from Valencia who arrived about three weeks ago and has been staying in a Midtown shelter, said that more migrants would mean more competition for jobs.

"I imagine that it will bring many more Venezuelans here to New York," he said. "But there are already too many Venezuelans here looking for work, trying to start a new life. Too many Venezuelans, too many Haitians, too many Dominicans. Everyone is looking for work, and this change is just going to bring more people."

Mark Krikorian, executive director of the Center for Immigration Studies, a right-leaning think tank that favors restricting immigration, said that the administration's pattern of granting extensions would prompt many to take their chances at the border.

"If you're a Venezuelan," he said, "there is every reason to believe that you will be included in the next extension of T.P.S. 18 months from now."

Mayor Eric Adams of New York, who had been pressing the White House for months on expediting work authorization, called the decision an "important step that will bring hope to the thousands of Venezuelan asylum seekers currently in our care who will now be immediately eligible for temporary protected status."

Murad Awawdeh, executive director of the New York Immigration Coalition, pointed out that the Venezuelans who have entered the United States in the past two years are only a small fraction of the seven million who have fled the economically devastated nation during that time.

"The reason so many people globally are fleeing their home countries is not because of T.P.S.," he said. "It's because conditions on the ground in their home countries are deteriorating so rapidly that they are fleeing for safety."

Los Angeles Councilman to Run Again, Despite Racist Audio

By SHAWN HUBLER

For the past year, Kevin de León, a Los Angeles city councilman, has been trying to make amends in his diverse and liberal city, hoping to remind voters of the formidable record he had before a secretly taped conversation nearly ended his political career. The campaign has been arduous.

The audio was about as damaging as can be, including his saying that a white colleague displayed his Black son the way a colleague displayed her status handbag, and his failing to challenge deeply offensive and racist remarks by other Latino political figures in the room.

Fellow Democrats, ranging from local activists to President Biden, called for his resignation. Protesters camped outside his house and shouted him down at Council meetings. There have been death threats and an attempted recall.

On Wednesday, however, Mr. de León bucked conventional wisdom and announced that he would not only keep serving but also be running in 2024 for another four-year term to represent his predominantly Latino district, which straddles East Los Angeles and downtown.

"I've learned that people have huge hearts," he said of his conversations over the past year. "People picked me up from the floor. They've had my back. So maybe I can have theirs now."

Mr. de León announced that he would run for re-election as the scandal approached its one-year anniversary. He is the only one of the three Council members who were heard on the notorious audio to still hold office.

His decision, first reported by Politico, came as police continued their investigation into the source of the recording, which rocked the nation's second-largest city, testing race relations and upending its political establishment.

The recording, made in October 2021 at the offices of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, caught the federation president at the time, Ron Herrera, strategizing with three Latino City Council members — Mr. de León, Gil Cedillo and Nury Martinez, then president of the council — about how to consolidate power for the Latino plurality of voters in the city.

All of those involved in the conversation swiftly apologized, publicly and profusely. Mr. de León said that his handbag remark — made after Ms. Martinez criticized their white colleague — had merely been an awkward attempt to defuse her remarks with a tease about her penchant for luxury accessories. But the damage was done. Mr. Herrera and Ms. Martinez resigned within days, and Mr. Cedillo left office soon afterward, having lost a re-election bid to a candidate who was younger and more progressive.

Kevin de León has resisted calls to resign from Democratic activists and President Biden.

But Mr. de León, 56, refused to step down. The son of immigrants and a former state legislative leader, he counted among his Capitol accomplishments a "sanctuary state" law that limited the use of local and state resources in immigration enforcement. To step down, he said at the time, would be to abandon his district.

Instead, he said, he would meet with and apologize to constituents and take professional sensitivity training.

Since then, at least two serious challengers — both Democratic members of the State Assembly — have launched campaigns for his office, which comes with a more than $218,000 annual salary.

Assemblyman Miguel Santiago, a Democrat from the area, has so far been considered the front-runner, collecting some $242,000 in campaign contributions as of June, according to the most recent campaign filings. He has also received endorsements from most of the local labor organizations, usually a pivotal source of support in Los Angeles elections.

Assemblywoman Wendy Carrillo, who is well known in the district, had raised about $116,000 as of the June filing period.

The March 2024 primary is expected to winnow the field to the top two candidates, with the winner to be determined on the same ballot as the November presidential election.

Mr. de León is also somewhat late to the campaign, officially entering the race as the Labor Federation is finalizing its endorsement decisions. And reaction to his announcement on Wednesday, while muted, reflected scant forgiveness from his critics.

Assemblyman Isaac G. Bryan, the majority leader, said on X, the social media site formerly known as Twitter, "Being an elected official is about knowing it's always bigger than you. Ideally you learn this before you run, but you should for sure have it learned by the time the President, Governor, Mayor, and literally everybody else call you to resign for spreading hate and bigotry."

"You ain't lyin," responded Eunisses Hernandez, a progressive Los Angeles councilwoman who has refused to second any of Mr. de León's Council motions since the audio leak.

Still, Mr. de León, who won his Council seat easily in 2020, is extremely well known throughout the district and remains popular in key neighborhoods. He has been a constant, if not incessant, presence in his district, opening housing for homeless people and announcing tens of millions of dollars in grants for streetlights and sidewalk repairs. And, so far, attempts to recall Mr. de León have failed.

"Politics is a brutal and unforgiving sport," he acknowledged. "But we're entering this race with a huge list of accomplishments."

Sanity Ruling Favors One Of 5 Accused In 9/11 Trial

By CAROL ROSENBERG

GUANTÁNAMO BAY, Cuba — A military judge ruled on Thursday that a defendant in the Sept. 11 case who was tortured by the C.I.A. was ineligible for a death-penalty trial, adopting a mental health finding that the prisoner was too psychologically damaged to help defend himself.

Col. Matthew N. McCall, the judge, disqualified Ramzi bin al-Shibh, 51, from what had been a five-defendant conspiracy case in an 11-page ruling on Thursday evening.

Mr. bin al-Shibh was charged as an accomplice in the attacks that killed 2,976 people, and is accused of helping organize a cell of hijackers in Hamburg, Germany, whose leader commandeered Flight No. 11 and flew it into the World Trade Center on Sept. 11, 2001.

The judge ordered pretrial proceedings to continue on Friday with Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, who is accused of being the mastermind of the plot, and the other three defendants but excluded Mr. bin al-Shibh from the hearing.

The decision appeared to tacitly vindicate a claim by the prisoner's criminal defense lawyer, David I. Bruck, that the C.I.A. torture had made the Yemeni prisoner insane.

Prosecutors had urged the judge to reject the Aug. 24 finding by a team of U.S. military psychiatrists and a forensic psychologist that Mr. bin al-Shibh has "a mental disease or defect" that left him unable to understand the proceeding against him or cooperate with his legal team.

The sanity board diagnosed him as having post-traumatic stress disorder with secondary psychotic features as well as a delusional disorder.

For years, Mr. bin al-Shibh has said he was tormented by invisible forces that caused his bed and cell to vibrate and that stung his genitals, depriving him of sleep. He has disrupted court proceedings and the peace at the prison for "high-value detainees" who had been subjected to "enhanced interrogation," such as waterboarding, beatings and sleep deprivation, in C.I.A. custody.

Mr. Bruck told the judge on Tuesday that Mr. bin al-Shibh was a broken man from his C.I.A. detention from 2002 to 2006, during which he was held in solitary confinement, deprived of sleep and abused in other ways, including being forced to stand chained and in a diaper for up to three days at a time. He described Mr. bin al-Shibh as so trapped in an endless cycle of sleep deprivation that he could not help mount a defense.

The prisoner's "complex delusions and hallucinations" are "omnipresent" at legal meetings, said Mr. Bruck.

In response to a question from the judge, Mr. Bruck said his team devoted almost all of its time with the prisoner trying to mollify him by documenting his delusions or trying to intercede on his behalf with prisoner commanders, who respond to his angry outbursts and efforts to damage his cell by placing him in isolation reminiscent of his solitary confinement.

The Pentagon did not immediately release the decision.

"The totality of the facts demonstrates an accused who is wholly focused on his delusions," Colonel McCall wrote, according to a portion read aloud by a lawyer who received a copy. "Again and again he focuses his counsel's work on stopping his delusional harassment."

In severing Mr. bin al-Shibh from the case, the judge essentially suspended his prosecution until his mental health is restored.

The Pentagon's prosecutor, Clayton G. Trivett Jr., argued that the diagnosis was unreliable and legally flawed because the three Defense Department mental health experts focused on an irrational demand that Mr. bin al-Shibh made at the start of plea negotiations in March last year.

Until this week, prosecutors had been offering a maximum sentence of life in prison, rather than the possibility of capital punishment, in exchange for detailed admissions of guilt by a defendant willing to describe his role in the attacks.

Mr. bin al-Shibh had only one demand, which essentially disqualified him from negotiations: Make the prison stop assaulting him with its invisible system of sleep deprivation. That mistreatment is not happening, prison staff members have testified.

The judge sealed the full 80-page report by the panel at the request of Mr. bin al-Shibh's legal team but released a single-page summary of their findings.

On Thursday night, Mr. Bruck said that it was indisputable " that the C.I.A. torture program did profound harm to the people subjected to it." He added that while the board found Mr. bin al-Shibh unfit in August, "there is nothing new about his condition now."

"He has been like this the whole time," Mr. Bruck said. "It has taken this long to admit it."

Efforts to Ban Books Are Rapidly Increasing at Public Libraries

By ELIZABETH A. HARRIS and ALEXANDRA ALTER

More than two years into a sharp rise in book challenges across the United States, restrictions are increasingly targeting public libraries, where they could affect not only the children's section but also the books available to everyone in a community.

The shift comes amid a dramatic increase in efforts to remove books from libraries, according to a pair of new reports released this week from the American Library Association and PEN America, a free speech organization.

The A.L.A. found that nearly half the book challenges it tracked between January and August of this year took place in public libraries, up from 16 percent during the same period the year before. The association reported nearly 700 attempts to censor library materials, which targeted more than 1,900 individual titles — more than during the same period in 2022, a year that saw the most titles challenged since the organization began tracking the data.

Most of the challenged books were by or about people of color or L.G.B.T.Q. people.

"A year, a year and a half ago, we were told that these books didn't belong in school libraries, and if people wanted to read them, they could go to a public library," said Deborah Caldwell-Stone, the director of the A.L.A.'s Office for Intellectual Freedom. "Now, we're seeing those same groups come to public libraries and come after the same books, essentially depriving everyone of the ability to make the choice to read them."

The new figures underscore a stark new reality for librarians and libraries, which have increasingly found themselves at the center of a vicious new front in the culture wars.

AGNES LOPEZ FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES
Most of the books being challenged are by or about people of color or L.G.B.T.Q. people.

Some libraries have received bomb threats; others are at risk of having their funding slashed, or even face closure, over disputes about book removals. In some instances, librarians have been harassed, threatened and called groomers and pedophiles.

The A.L.A. itself has come under attack for its policies regulating library collections. In recent months, libraries in a handful of states, including Texas, Montana and Missouri, have cut ties with the A.L.A.

The movement to restrict access to books is likely broader than the numbers indicate. PEN's numbers are compiled from public reports, school district data and local organizations that track book bans, but many removals are likely going unreported.

The PEN report, which counted book removals in school and classroom libraries during the 2022-2023 school year, found 3,362 cases of books being removed, a 33 percent increase over the previous school year. More than 1,550 individual titles were targeted. Many of the same books are challenged around the country, including classics by Toni Morrison and Margaret Atwood, and contemporary young adult fiction by popular authors like John Green.

The most dramatic spike in book bans took place in Florida, which removed more than 1,400 books and surpassed Texas as the state with the highest number of removals, according to PEN. Florida emerged as a hot spot for book challenges after the state passed laws aimed at restricting reading material on certain subjects. As school districts scrambled to comply with the new regulations earlier this year, some teachers and librarians removed entire shelves of books.

While book banning isn't a new issue, it has become an increasingly volatile and polarizing one. Book removals have been increasing around the U.S. for more than two years, beginning with the rise of "parents' rights" groups that formed during the pandemic to challenge Covid restrictions and then, what material students were exposed to in schools.

That movement has accelerated as such groups, including Moms for Liberty and Utah Parents United, have circulated lists of books that they deem objectionable, and lobbied for new legislation and new library policies that make it easier to challenge books.

Brooke Stephens, the education director at Utah Parents United, runs a website that rates what it describes as sexually explicit books. She said that calling these books "banned" is wrong; they are available in bookstores, for example, and online. Her work, she said, focuses on keeping them out of school libraries where children can stumble upon them and encounter subject matter for which they're unprepared.

Books should have a rating system, she said, the way movies and video games do.

"There's something about the privacy of the written word that makes people think it's different than a movie in a classroom," Ms. Stephens said. "But I don't believe they'd read these books out loud in a classroom because they're inappropriate."

While restrictions on books are rising, efforts to combat them are, as well. Lawsuits challenging new state laws have been filed in states including Arkansas and Florida, and a judge in Texas recently issued a preliminary injunction against a law that would require bookstores to evaluate and rate every title they sell to schools and every book they've sold to schools in the past.

Free speech advocates say that they see no sign that efforts to ban books are slowing down, and warn that the next phase of the movement may be harder to quantify and counteract, as some school districts suspend new book purchases, or avoid stocking books on topics that might be viewed as controversial.

"The way it's going to begin to manifest may look different," said Kasey Meehan, the lead author of PEN's report. "We'll begin to see this chilled atmosphere play out in different ways, either through quietly removing books, or not bringing books in, in the first place."

At Bronx Day Care, a Trap Door Hid a Cache of Drugs Where a Child Died

By HURUBIE MEKO

Days after a 1-year-old died and three children exposed to drugs at a Bronx day care site were hospitalized, investigators uncovered a trap door under a play area that was concealing fentanyl, other narcotics and drug paraphernalia.

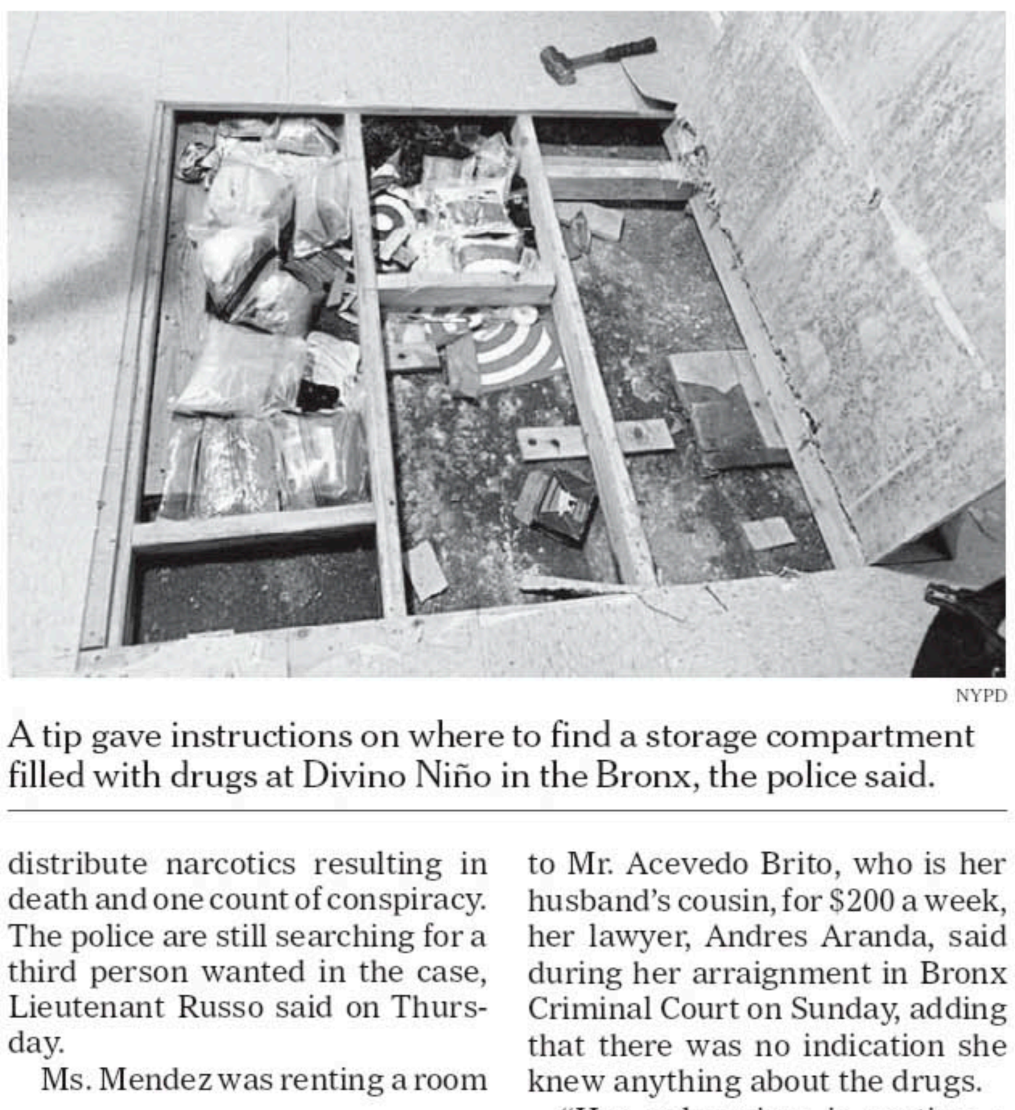
The police had already discovered a kilogram of fentanyl near nap mats at Divino Niño on Morris Avenue, but the new search was triggered by a tip that more drugs had been hidden, Lieutenant John Russo said on Thursday. A neighbor had said last week that the owners of the facility had spent months sprucing it up — including laying down new floors.

On Saturday, the day care program's operator, Grei Mendez, and a tenant, Carlisto Acevedo Brito, who lived in the apartment, were both arrested and charged with murder in the death of the toddler, Nicholas Feliz Dominici, as well as criminal possession of drugs and other related charges. In addition to the kilogram, the police had already recovered two so-called kilo presses used by drug dealers to package large quantities of drugs.

As of Thursday afternoon, the medical examiner's office had not made an official determination of the cause of Nicholas's death following an autopsy on Saturday. Fentanyl was found in the systems of the three children who were sickened.

The day care site, in the north Bronx, is among the areas hardest hit by fatal overdoses in the city. There were 2,668 fatal overdoses in the city in 2021, reaching "unprecedented levels," according to data released this year. The increase was driven by fentanyl, a synthetic opioid that was involved in 80 percent of overdose deaths that year, and residents of the Bronx had the highest rate, the city found.

Ms. Mendez, a citizen of the Dominican Republic who has lived in the United States for nine years, and Mr. Acevedo Brito are also facing federal charges of one count of possession with intent to distribute narcotics resulting in death and one count of conspiracy. The police are still searching for a third person wanted in the case, Lieutenant Russo said on Thursday.


NYPD
A tip gave instructions on where to find a storage compartment filled with drugs at Divino Niño in the Bronx, the police said.

Ms. Mendez was renting a room to Mr. Acevedo Brito, who is her husband's cousin, for $200 a week, her lawyer, Andres Aranda, said during her arraignment in Bronx Criminal Court on Sunday, adding that there was no indication she knew anything about the drugs.

"Her only crime is renting a room," he said.

Federal prosecutors said that Ms. Mendez called her husband twice before calling 911. A federal criminal complaint said that before emergency personnel arrived, the husband entered the apartment empty-handed and left about two minutes later carrying two shopping bags weighed down by their contents.

On Thursday, members of the Police Department's crime scene unit had taped off the area. Children played on the sidewalk and stood by the apartment building, where candles, flowers and a teddy bear were left outside the front door. Investigators in white hazmat suits and industrial-grade masks entered the building and walked out hauling brown evidence bags.

The tip the police received gave specific instructions on where to find the trap door and how to access it, Lieutenant Russo said. A photo released by the police showed a storage compartment about four feet by six feet under a splintered wooden door. Large, clear storage bags filled with narcotics, as well as red Target shopping bags, were visible in the cache under a gray linoleum floor. A shelf holding toys was nearby.

Officials said the day care program was licensed in May to serve up to eight children at a time by the state's Office of Children and Family Services after passing two inspections. In addition, a surprise inspection this month found no violations.

Investigators this week said they were working with federal authorities to determine whether Divino Niño was a front for a drug operation.

Silvia Leal, 65, who has lived in the Bronx for 30 years and operated a day care program before retiring, said she found the situation suspicious.

"For someone to open a day care in the United States you have to take classes, there is paperwork, your fingerprints get lifted, you have to have start-up capital and there are a lot of details and requirements," she said. "For her to open a day care so quickly in this neighborhood, someone had to have given her money.

"They were using that day care to cover something up," she said.

Corrections

BUSINESS

A column on Thursday about Google's artificial intelligence chatbot, using information from Google, misstated a caveat about Bard. It is not true that in certain cases — such as when users ask Bard a question about their email, then ask follow-up questions based on Bard's response — human reviewers could end up seeing those users' personal information.

ARTS

An On Comedy article on Thursday about lies comedians tell misstated the circumstances of Mike Daisey's China story. He said he was outside the gates of the factory; he did not say he visited it.

SCIENCE TIMES

An article on Tuesday about the oral history of a small group of nomadic people living in Indonesia's rainforest misstated what kind of tool the researchers used to record the Punan's movements. The scientists used GPS belts, not GPS ankle bracelets.

Errors are corrected during the press run whenever possible, so some errors noted here may not have appeared in all editions.

Contact the Newsroom
To contact the newsroom regarding correction requests, please email corrections@nytimes.com.

Michael Leva, 62, Dies; A Designer Who Found Fame Had a Downside

By PENELOPE GREEN

Michael Leva, who was a celebrated young fashion designer on the verge of national prominence, then pivoted to a career as a fashion executive and branding consultant, died on Sept. 14 in Providence, R.I. He was 62.

His friend Maggie McCormick said the cause was heart failure.

Women's Wear Daily in 1989 declared Mr. Leva one of "The New Majors," noting a few months later that he was "evolving into a design talent to be reckoned with."

When demand rose, he faced a Catch-22: He lacked the money to fill the orders.

The short-lived New York City weekly 7 Days put him on its cover in March of that year for its "Designers on the Verge" feature. The Los Angeles Times in 1990 heralded Mr. Leva, then 29, as part of "New York's new guard" — buzzy, young designers like Jennifer George, Rebecca Moses and Gordon Henderson.

"We're all very different in what we do but similar in the sense of affordability," Mr. Leva told the newspaper. "Our clothes are a little more real."

Vogue profiled Mr. Leva in 1989, noting his sober mien, which the writer likened to that of a "new age monk," and his good manners: "He's the sort of person that says thank you — and really means it."

Mr. Leva made his fashion debut in 1986 with tie-dyed taffeta evening dresses on models who strode out to music by Nico and the Velvet Underground. The show, held in the Soho boutique of the nightlife impresario Susanne Bartsch, was paid for by his parents.

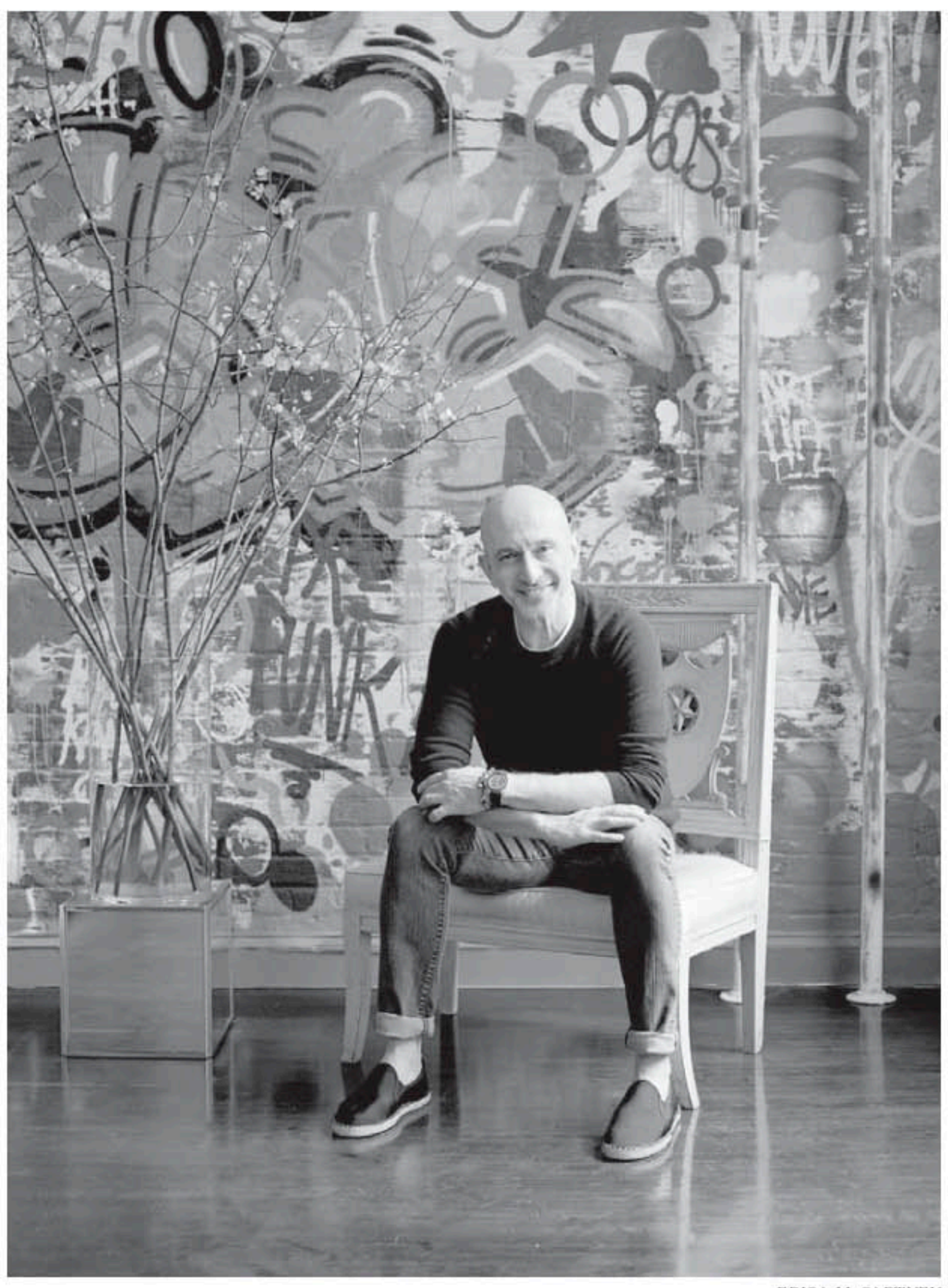
Soon after, Aileen Newquist, a former analyst at Morgan Stanley who had been a high school friend of Mr. Leva's, organized a group of investors to finance his business. "I want to make clothes that are special and new, not just weird," he told The Miami Herald in 1986. His work matured quickly.

"His clothes were often described as Beene-like, but he was no copyist," said Amy Fine Collins, an art and fashion historian and muse of the designer Geoffrey Beene, in a phone interview. "His shapes were based on the natural world and the body itself. He was a refined colorist. Especially in a series of Rothko-inspired dresses he did one season, you could see how well he understood the musicality of color and proportions. His clothes were feminine, American and extremely modern."

"Mr. Leva designs with a deceptive, almost repetitive, simplicity," Woody Hochswender of The New York Times wrote in April 1991, when Mr. Leva's collection featured the simple wool crepe dresses inspired by the paintings of Mark Rothko.

"His fashion was like Michael himself," Wendy Goodman of New York magazine said in a phone interview. "It was joyous and fresh and made to wear, as clothes were back then."

By July of 1991, however, Mr. Leva, then 30, announced he was shuttering his business, caught in a Catch-22 that many successful young designers encountered, as Mr. Hochswender put it. He had been selling briskly at Saks Fifth Avenue and Bergdorf Goodman, among other stores, but did not have the money to fill the orders for the next season.



ERICA McCARTNEY

Michael Leva in New York in 2017. "His shapes were based on the natural world and the body itself," one fashion historian said.

"This is a question of capital and capital alone," he told Mr. Hochswender, adding that he had been trying to sell the company for two years.

"I hope to be back very soon," he said. "I don't feel beaten. I'm ready to get right back in there."

He did return, for a few seasons starting in the fall of 1993, backed by Cotton Inc., a trade organization that sponsored three other young designers as well. Anne-Marie Schiro of The Times called Mr. Leva's spring show a "welcome return" and praised the "snappy young styles he does so well."

By 1995, however, he was consulting for a Japanese company, the Miki Corporation.

"It's good money for very little headache," he told Constance C.R. White of The Times. "I literally made no money when I worked on my own. I make good money now."

Michael Leva was born on Jan. 15, 1961, in Denville, N.J., and grew up in Morristown. His father, James, was an electric utility company executive. His mother, Marie (Marinaro) Leva, was a homemaker and middle school librarian.

He had planned to study landscape architecture at the Rhode Island School of Design but switched his major to apparel design his first year. "I liked the immediacy of grabbing the fabric, throwing it on the form, pinning it," he told Vogue in 1989. "It's similar to what I love about gardening: the hands-on experience. Architecture is just tons of planning and drawings, and, you know, I just lost interest in it."

KYLE ERICKSEN/WWD — PENSKE MEDIA, VIA GETTY IMAGES

Mr. Leva adjusting the ensemble on a model in 1988 as two assistants looked on. The next year, Women's Wear Daily declared the fashion designer one of "The New Majors."

Mr. Leva was an ardent, skilled gardener. Even after he began his fashion business, his mother told The Times, he would take the train out to northern New Jersey to his parents' house in Chester and work in the garden until dark. He created an all-white perennial garden there, which was his inspiration for his all-white evening collection in the spring of 1990. It "drew praise for its delicate fabrics and flowing lines," The Times reported.

After closing his business, Mr. Leva was a branding and design consultant for various companies, including Macy's, J.Jill, Victoria's Secret, Casual Corner and C. Wonder, the short-lived retail venture of Christopher Burch, Tory Burch's former husband. He helped write "Recipes for Parties" (2014), a book on entertaining, with Nancy Parker. He moved to Rhode Island in 2018 and lectured at RISD.

FAIRCHILD ARCHIVE/WWD — PENSKE MEDIA, VIA GETTY IMAGES

Posing with a model. "His fashion was like Michael himself," Wendy Goodman of New York magazine said. "It was joyous and fresh and made to wear, as clothes were back then."

He is survived by his partner, Clifton Brown; his mother; his sister, Linda Leva; and his brothers, James and Christopher.

When Mr. Leva was a student at RISD, he was already sure of his talent and skills, said Richard Pandiscio, the veteran art director of Paper Magazine, Conde Nast Traveler and Interview magazine who was Mr. Leva's boyfriend at the time.

"He was both a pixie and a bulldog," he wrote in a text message, "petite and funny but ferocious when provoked (or when he didn't like what you were wearing)."

"He loved to entertain," Mr. Pandiscio continued. "He could pull together an elaborate dinner party in his dorm room with no more resources than a hot plate and a bathroom sink. He was the first student I ever met who cared about tableware, proper pots and pans, and a linen napkin."

Gita Mehta, 80, Writer Who Offered A Woman's Opinion of Modern India

By NEIL GENZLINGER

Gita Mehta, whose books examined the impact of Western culture on modern India and vice versa, bringing an Indian and a woman's perspective to subject matter that was long the province of white men, died on Saturday at her home in New Delhi. She was 80.

Nicholas Latimer, a vice president and director of publicity at Knopf, where Ms. Mehta's husband, Sonny Mehta, was president and editor in chief for many years, said the cause was complications of a stroke.

Ms. Mehta and her husband, one of the most influential editors of his time, were familiar faces in literary circles in New York, London and India, each of which they called home at various times. In 1979 Ms. Mehta published her first book, "Karma Cola: Marketing the Mystic East," a mix of anecdotes and commentary that took a satirical look at the faddish pursuit by hippies and other Westerners of enlightenment in India's ashrams, and at the gurus who took advantage of them.

"Gita Mehta sees a West eager to invest its excess narcissism in Eastern religion, and an East hoping to invest its future — soul be damned — in Western technology," Polly Morrice wrote in a review in Newsday. "Her view, basically moral and conservative, is of cultures in decline."

Ms. Mehta followed that in 1989 with "Raj," a historical novel about a princess brought up in an Indian royal house in Rajasthan, in northern India, in the early decades of the last century, when Britain ruled the country. The book, which covered the half-century leading to independence in 1947, started out, she told The Sunday Telegraph of Britain, as a satire about the excessive lifestyle of Indian princesses in the 1920s. But as she researched the topic, she said, the novel became more about "the extent to which an imperial power can convince the colonized people that they are progressive insofar

Always eager to shoot down the notion that India was somehow backward.

as they imitate their imperial masters, backward insofar as they remain native."

"Raj" set itself apart by being centered on a female character.

"I had to write it from the point of view of a woman," Ms. Mehta told The Telegraph, "because the British Empire had so successfully emasculated Indian rulers — the only people they hadn't been able to touch were the women. It was in the women's quarters of the kingdoms that the sense of injustice, of the corrosion of dignity and of tradition, was kept very sharply alive."

"A River Sutra," published in 1993, was a collection of interlocking stories tied together by a narrator, a retired civil servant seeking peace on a riverbank.

"The results," the novelist Edward Hower wrote in a review in The New York Times, "are sometimes comic, sometimes tragic and always — as befitting a sutra, a collection of wise sayings — filled with insights into the nature of spirituality and worldly love."

Ms. Mehta returned to nonfiction in 1997 with "Snakes and Ladders: Glimpses of India," an essay collection published to coincide with the 50th anniversary of India's independence. The pieces, Barbara Crossette wrote in The Times, showed "a frankness and incisiveness still in surprisingly short supply among many who write about India."

"Mehta's years in London and New York," Ms. Crossette continued, "add interesting dimensions to her sense of what India has become in the past 50 years and what Indians have come to expect from the rest of the world."

Ms. Mehta was always eager to shoot down the notion that India and other parts of the Eastern world were somehow backward; in interviews, she would cite the mathematical, medical and other advances taking place there long before the Western Enlightenment.

"The assumption that these were primitive cultures," she told The Independent of Britain in 1997, "is just a sideline of imperialism; you believe that everything that's available to you must be Western."

GREG WHITE/FAIRFAX MEDIA, VIA GETTY IMAGES

Gita Mehta in 1990. Her books brought a fresh perspective to subject matter that was long the province of white men.

As for literature about India and the rest of the East, she knew the limits of writers like E.M. Forster and Rudyard Kipling.

"These people were all writing about India through the British prism, through the lens of the British seeing a colonized people," she told the public radio show "Fresh Air" in 1991. "And to that extent it was an inaccurate picture, in my view. And certainly they wrote largely about men."

Gita Patnaik was born on Dec. 12, 1942, in New Delhi to Biju and Gyan Patnaik. In the 1940s her father was a daring pilot, flying missions for the British in Burma but also doing clandestine work for the pro-independence movement.

"Two weeks after I was born," Ms. Mehta told "Fresh Air," "my father was taken off in handcuffs to British jails, where he was kept for the next three and a half years."

In "Snakes and Ladders," she wrote that as he was being led away, her father whispered to her mother that she should dispose of pistols he was keeping for some young nationalists. Her mother stuffed them into pillowcases, drove to what seemed a secluded spot and threw them in a ditch.

"The next day Mother discovered she had decanted the pistols outside the walled compound of the Chief Inspector of Police," Ms. Mehta wrote. "Fortunately, even in that moment of high melodrama, my mother, with the miserliness of the good housewife, had been careful not to use her monogrammed linen."

Her father was released from prison in 1946 and went on to a successful career as a businessman and politician.

Ms. Mehta earned a degree at Cambridge University, which is also where she met Ajai Singh Mehta, known as Sonny. They married in 1965.

In her 20s Ms. Mehta taught briefly at Bombay University and worked on documentaries for British television, but she soon abandoned that career. "I fell back into my natural indolence," she joked in the Sunday Telegram interview.

Mr. Mehta died in 2019. Ms. Mehta is survived by their son, Aditya Mehta; a granddaughter; and two brothers, Prem and Naveen Patnaik.

"I'm lucky to be a writer coming out of a civilization like India," Ms. Mehta told The San Francisco Chronicle in 1993. "After all, ours is the civilization that based everything on relativity long before Albert Einstein came up with the physics of it. The notion of relativity, of time, of experience and of cognition is something we as writers can always tap into."

Deaths

Anspach, Ellan
DiPaola, Jean
Gittens, Georgetta
Globus, David
Greenberg, Lorna
Perless, Robert
Rosof, Howard
Teague, Walter
Weil, Albert

ANSPACH—Ellan Metz.

Ellan Metz Anspach, of East Falmouth and formerly of Greenwich, CT, passed away on September 10, 2023. She was 83 years old. She was born to Harry Edward Metz and Audrey Grace Ashton Metz in Hartford, CT on January 24, 1940. She grew up in New Britain, CT where she graduated from New Britain Senior High School. Ellan attended Marjorie Webster Junior College, in Washington DC. Then she returned to New Britain where she began her work life. Ellan moved to New York City in 1961, where she worked as an Executive Secretary and Administrative Assistant at various companies. Those companies included: Managing and Marketing Institute, Arthur D. Little, Inc., Lippincott & Margulies, Inc., Anspach Grossman Portugal, Inc., and Shelley Systems, Inc. Ellan was a devoted wife and mother. She was married to Russell R. Anspach for 49 years. She gave selflessly to her family and poured her energy into managing a family of seven children. Additionally, she was a positive force and great encourager for her many friends, as well as for her four nephews, two nieces and their families. Her ready smile and warm presence put everyone at ease and made all feel welcome. She had a steel-trap memory for the happenings in everyone's lives and never failed to remember a birthday or special event. She was an accomplished needle pointer, and her creations adorn many houses at Christmastime, reminding us of her love, joy, and generosity. Ellan is survived by her husband, Russell R. Anspach, children David Anspach of Wilton, CT, Christopher Anspach of New Canaan, CT, Kathleen Stevenson of Portland, OR, Melissa Anspach of Sarasota, FL, Noelle Anspach of East Falmouth, MA and Jennifer Manelski of Vero Beach, FL. She leaves 11 grandchildren, three great-grandchildren, her sister-in-law Betsey Metz of Chappaqua, NY, four nephews, and two nieces. She was predeceased by her daughter, Laurie Anspach She will be missed by all, including the mailman. For Online Guestbook visit: www.chapmanfuneral.com.

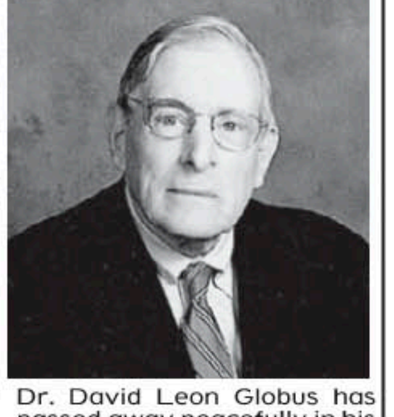
DiPAOLA—Jean M.

It is with gratitude and love that we pay tribute to our mother Jean M. DiPaola. She was deeply loved as a mother, wife, sister, grandmother and great-grandmother, and a valued friend. Jean was an avid learner. She received a BA in Mathematics at Hunter College, and took classes at Fordham into her nineties. Jean was grounded in the enduring love of her husband Bob, ever since their first meeting as infants on their grandmothers' adjoining First Avenue fire escapes. Together they delighted in city life, high-rise sunsets and the life flow of the East River. One of Jean's favorite activities was running to catch the bus to attend the opera, the Philharmonic, countless exhibitions, and a protest or two with her wonderful circle of friends. Jean leaves her family with full hearts as she joins her beloved Bobby, watching sunsets down by the river.

GITTENS—Georgetta.

Hunter College deeply mourns the loss of Georgetta Gittens '80, a magna cum laude graduate, member of our Alumni Association Board of Directors, Wistarians Alumni Chapter president, 2011 Hunter Hall of Fame inductee, and recipient of our distinguished service award. Her deep commitment to Hunter College and to her former professor led to the opening of the Dr. John Henrik Clarke Study Lounge. We will miss her greatly. Our heartfelt sympathies to her family.

GLOBUS—Dr. David Leon.



Dr. David Leon Globus has passed away peacefully in his Manhattan home after a brief illness. He would have been 93 on October 1st. Born in Kansas City, MO, Dr. Globus attended high school at Wentworth Military Academy in Lexington, MO, graduating in 1947. He received his medical degree from Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis in 1954. In 1958, after serving in the army in West Germany, he moved to New York City, and for six decades he practiced as an internist there with a specialty in nephrology. He maintained privileges at New York Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center, where he had been a resident in the early 1960s (a rarity at the time for Jewish doctors), and became a celebrated teacher of Physical Diagnosis. His patients, family, and many friends bore frequent witness not only to his remarkable diagnostic skill but also to his intelligence, warmth, and ebullience, and to the infectious joy he took in the pleasures his life so abundantly provided. Dr. Globus was married twice, first to Vivian Irwig Globus, whom he wed in Birmingham, AL in 1958. She passed away on March 24, 1973. Of his four children from that marriage, he is survived by two daughters, Laura Day and Martha Globus-Rodriguez; Laura's son, Samson Day, and his wife, Caroline Pires Day, and Laura's husband, Stephen Schiff; and Martha's children, Zachary A. Rodriguez and Isabel Rodriguez. Two other children from Dr. Globus's first marriage, Alexander Globus and Sarah Globus Goldfield, predeceased him. He is also survived by Alexander's ex-wife, Alison Mozias Globus, and their daughter, Vivian Globus, and by Sarah's widower, Herschel Goldfield, and their children, Ori Goldfield and Vivian Goldfield. In 1977, Dr. Globus married his second wife, Suellen Tuby Globus, who had three daughters from a previous marriage. Suellen passed away on June 3, 2020. Dr. Globus is survived by his stepchildren and their husbands: Tracy and Michael Nathanson, Daryl and Alan Eisenberg, and Allison and Lou Wallach, as well as by his step-grandchildren, Jillian Karson (and her husband, Micah Karson), Amanda Eisenberg, Jake Nathanson, Nicky Nathanson, Charlie Wallach, and Annie Wallach. Before his first marriage, Dr. Globus fathered another daughter, whom he became close to during his final years. Jacqueline Stoeckler and her daughter, Jelena, also survive him.

GREENBERG—Lorna Lipson (Lol),

age 84 passed away peacefully at her home in Scarsdale, NY on September 21, 2023, after a long illness. Lol's career, and much of her life, revolved around the written word. After a long career as an editor and revisor, focusing on books for younger readers, she turned to writing books for that audience about a wide range of topics, from archaeology and anthropology to health and the law. She revised a highly regarded series of First Books on the ancient civilizations of Egypt, Rome, Greece, Mesoamerica and South America. Her book AIDS How it Works in the Body, published in 1992 was one of the first to explain the illness to a younger audience and dispelled many myths and misconceptions of the time. She co-authored a compilation of profiles of archeologists, Digging into the Past, which inspired a new generation of archeologists. She also co-authored a book for adults, The Circumcision Decision: An Unbiased Guide for Parents, which won a national parenting book award in 2013. Lol graduated from the University of Rochester and held a masters' degree in publishing from New York University. A passionate, and wide-ranging reader and active book club member, Lorna was also devoted to the visual arts, music, and theater. She and her husband of 63 years, Ronald, traveled throughout the world, often with friends or family, especially enjoying their journeys to far-flung sites of archaeological interest. Lorna is survived by Ron, her children Alissa and Lawrence, and five grandchildren. A private memorial service will be scheduled at a later date. In lieu of flowers, donations, if desired, should be sent to Reading is Fundamental (www.RIF.org).

PERLESS—Robert.

Kinetic sculptor, beloved and loving husband of 58 years to Ellen, creative inspiration to us all. Private memorial.

ROSOF—Howard,

passed away peacefully on September 17, 2023. In no particular order: avid Brooklyn Dodger fan; father of Deb, Jeff and Ben; grandfather to Jacob; rewarding career at Freedom National and NatWest banks; brother to Steve and son of Pauline and Irving.

TEAGUE—Walter,

January 12, 1936 - March 27, 2023. Well-known political activist and therapist, Walter died of complications resulting from cancer and heart disease. He is survived by son Nikolai, brothers Lewis and Harry. Memorial services will held on October 8 at 2pm at the New Deal Cafe, Greenbelt, Maryland.

WEIL—Albert Benno.

We note with sorrow the passing of our member, Albert Benno Weil and extend sincerest condolences to his bereaved family.

Rabbi Angela Buchdahl
and President
Shonni Silverberg, MD;
Central Synagogue
of New York City

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Opinion

The New York Times

Timed Tests Are Biased Against Your Kids

Adam Grant
A contributing Opinion writer, an organizational psychologist at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School and the author of "Hidden Potential" and "Think Again."

We don't prize speed in surgery or tax preparation. Why make time pressure a thing in academics?

PETE GAMLEN

A FEW years ago, I started asking lecture halls filled with students to raise their hands if they had run out of time on the SAT. In each room, nearly every hand went up. I was surprised, but I shouldn't have been.

For decades, educators have seen speed as a marker of aptitude or mastery, forcing students to scramble to finish tests. But a race against the clock doesn't measure knowledge or intelligence. It assesses the much narrower skill of how well students reason under stress. As a result, timed tests underestimate the capabilities of countless students.

New evidence shows that although smarter people are faster at solving easy problems, they're actually slower to finish difficult ones. They're well aware that haste makes waste, and they don't want to sacrifice accuracy for speed. You wouldn't want a surgeon who rushes through a craniectomy or an accountant who dashes through your taxes. Even for the many jobs in which people are judged on speed, there's no evidence that doing algebra under time pressure is useful preparation. Although it pays to be quick, it also pays to be determined, disciplined and dependable.

Strangely, though, the tests that define students' grades and help determine their educational and professional fates are rarely designed for deliberation. They evaluate students as if they're applying to join a bomb squad or appear on "Jeopardy." Time pressure rewards students who think fast and shallow — and punishes those who think slow and deep.

One fall, one of our daughters was pleasantly surprised by her grade on a math midterm. Despite being the longest and hardest test of the semester, it was her highest score. At first we were puzzled: She hadn't changed her study habits or made a quantum leap in understanding. Then we learned that it was the first test where she didn't feel pressed for time. Her teacher had allowed more time per question than usual.

On math tests, one of the few skills in which boys consistently outperform girls is mental rotation — turning 3-D shapes in their minds. But gender differences vary significantly based on time pressure. Across several dozen studies, the more time students had to finish tests, the smaller the female disadvantage became. Shifting from short time limits to no time limits — or even just allowing more than 30 seconds per question — was enough to cut the gender gap in half.

It's well known that the "girls can't do math" stereotype can cause female students to underperform on math tests. The fear of confirming the stereotype can lead to test anxiety, draining working memory and disrupting cognitive processing. What we've overlooked is that time pressure can exacerbate these effects. When girls are distracted by doubts about their abilities, it takes them longer to finish problems. Having to rush leaves them more prone to choosing suboptimal strategies — and to possibly making mistakes. Even if they're not anxious, female students tend to work more methodically than male students. When they have more time, they can rethink their approaches and double-check their answers. They also become more comfortable making educated guesses.

I tried this out with our daughter on practice tests at home. She's an honors math student, but when she was under time pressure, she made distracted mistakes like plugging in the wrong formula on relatively easy algebra problems. It was the math version of a typo, and we ended up coining a term for it: a matho. But when there was no time limit, she excelled on difficult algebra problems — and mental rotation, too.

Time pressure doesn't just underrate the math abilities of girls and young women. Having to hurry can obscure the abilities of anyone who has reason to worry. That might include boys who are expected to underperform in reading, immigrants who are doubted on verbal aptitude and Black students who face a host of questions about their intellect. It also includes students with learning difficulties such as dyslexia and ADHD — or mental health conditions, physical disabilities and sensory impairments.

A common solution to this problem is for schools to offer extended time to accommodate students with disabilities. But lately, this has created an accommodations arms race as parents and students try to game the system to get diagnosed with a learning difficulty or health condition. Why not give *everyone* enough time to complete the test?

I heard from one counselor in the Northeast whose high school experimented with extended time for final exams. After allotting four hours instead of two, they were bombarded with complaints. Students who had previously met the requirements for special accommodations — and their parents — said they ran out of time. Why? The teachers wrote longer exams to fill the space.

This madness has to end. If a significant portion of the students run out of time, it means the test is too long or the time period is too short. That's why, as soon as I read about this evidence, I started writing two-hour exams for the three-hour exam period allocated to my class. But many other educators still cling to the fraternity hazing excuse: I had to walk five miles barefoot up a snow-covered hill, so you should suffer too! Most teachers, though, say they're preparing their students for the pressure they'll face taking standardized tests.

It's a delicious twist of irony, then, that the lifeboat to rescue us from the tyranny of time pressure is being piloted by the folks behind the mother of all standardized tests. I learned recently that the College Board has redesigned the SAT to minimize time pressure.

Historically, the SAT gave students "too much to cover and not enough time to do it," the College Board's chief executive officer, David Coleman, told me. But developing a digital version gave them the opportunity to experiment. And the results were so impressive that they decided to stick with them. Starting next year, the test is shorter overall, and most important, "on average, 97 percent of students complete all questions in a section with up to seven minutes to spare on each section," Mr. Coleman said. "It's time we stop confusing quick with smart."

This could be game-changing for teachers as well as students. If the dominant standardized test no longer creates time pressure, there's less need to use a ticking clock on classroom quizzes and exams. I don't expect students to start looking forward to tests, but they should be less likely to dread them. That will give them a better chance at putting their best foot forward. It will also give them a more realistic preview of what it takes to excel in the future.

In school, timed tests teach kids that success is a sprint. But in life, success is a marathon. Wisdom is less about the speed of thought than the complexity of thinking. The students with the greatest potential aren't always the ones who can rapidly spit out the right answers. They're often the ones who take the time to ask the right questions.

COLUMNIST | DAVID BROOKS

A Theory of Musk's Maniacal Drive

Walter Isaacson's biography depicts Tesla and SpaceX's chief as both hero and villain.

IN HIS BIOGRAPHY of Alexander Hamilton, Ron Chernow writes that Hamilton "always had to fight the residual sadness of the driven man." That sentence has stayed with me because I've also noticed that there can be something sad about extremely ambitious people — like they're striving furiously to fill a hole that was carved into them by traumatic experiences during childhood, and they have never quite succeeded.

Some historians and psychologists have marveled at how many of the most significant figures in history lost a parent at an early age, either to death or abandonment — from George Washington and Thomas Jefferson to Bill Clinton and Barack Obama. These are what one psychologist termed "eminent orphans."

It's easy to put Elon Musk into that category. He had a miserable childhood in South Africa marked by verbal and physical abuse from a father who repeatedly told him he was worthless, according to Walter Isaacson's new biography of Musk. He had no friends and lived in a world in which you either bullied or were bullied. A background like that might create a sense of existential insecurity, which could induce in some a lifetime of self-doubt or in others a manic ambition to prove the bastards wrong — to earn love, significance and safety.

But Isaacson's account suggests that this is not the only or even the main impetus behind Musk's extreme ambition. In the midst of that bleak childhood, Musk dived into science fiction, computer games and comics, and in some sense never left. In that world, Musk seems to have been gripped by a story just as fervently as a religious person is gripped by a holy book.

I believe most of us tell a story about our lives and then come to live within that story. You can't know who you are unless you know how to tell a coherent story about yourself. You can know what to do next only if you know what story you are a part of. "A man is always a teller of tales," the philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre observed. "He lives surrounded by his stories and the stories of others, he sees everything that happens to him through them, and he tries to live his own life as if he were telling a story."

The story Musk came to inhabit is one of the oldest in our civilization: A male hero of uncertain reputation emerges from an obscure place to save a doomed people through acts of daring. It is the story of Moses, Jesus, Superman, John Wayne westerns, Luke Skywalker, Harry Potter and the Lord of the Rings.

"While other entrepreneurs struggled to develop a worldview, he developed a cosmic view," Isaacson writes.

Musk's self-conception is that he is building companies to save humanity, according to Isaacson. SpaceX is to make humans a multiplanetary species, so we can escape to Mars if something apocalyptic happens to earth. Tesla's mission is to move humanity past a hydrocarbon economy, toward a sustainable future. His new firm xAI is there to help prevent artificial intelligence from taking over the world. Neuralink, which embeds technology into people's brains, is there to help the blind see and the paralyzed walk. You can't get more savior-like than that.

"People don't usually talk with such a superheroic, almost Homeric kind of vibe in Silicon Valley," Peter Thiel told Isaacson.

Sometimes the story Musk tells about himself seems so grandiose it enters the realm of epic myth. A person so consumed by a myth is not seeking to be conventionally successful, Dennis Ford argues in his book "The Search for Meaning"; he or she is trying "to be faithful to the mythic pattern."

ARCHIVO GBB/REDUX

Elon Musk at age 3.

Such a person is not seeing the world the rest of us are seeing, but his own mythic world, and is trying to recruit people into his own reality. "He kept talking about making a rocket that could go to Mars," one of Musk's college friends told Isaacson. "Of course, I didn't pay much attention, because I thought he was fantasizing." Decades later, on his second day working at SpaceX, an employee attended a board meeting and was gobsmacked: "They're sitting around seriously discussing plans to build a city on Mars and what people will wear there, and everyone's just acting like this is a totally normal conversation."

A person within this mythic consciousness can easily distort reality, confabulate and lie. Such a person can have the grandiose sense that he is indispensable to our species. Musk's perennial crisis/urgency mentality, which drives him to behave as a craptaculous jerk to the people around him and serves as a rationalization for when he does, also fits.

People who have met Musk sometimes say it's as if he is not a fully rounded human being, but seems like a character playing a role. One of Isaacson's sources says, "He's retained a childlike, almost stunted side." Perhaps it's because he is still inhabiting an adventure story.

Sometimes in life imagination is as important as intelligence. Musk's apparent attachment to the hero myth seems to both make him fearless and also frequently a kind of monster. The mythic mind is a self-involved mind, which can never quite regard other people as being as important as the hero/self. Indeed the Musk of Isaacson's book is on a series of epic quests — and is complex enough to be simultaneously hero and villain.

COLUMNIST | PAMELA PAUL

The Borking of Biden

JOSE R. LOPEZ/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Senator Joe Biden during hearings for Judge Robert Bork's nomination to the U.S. Supreme Court, in September 1987.

IF THERE WAS any doubt that the Republican House was no more sophisticated than a preschool playground, last week's opening of an impeachment inquiry into President Biden settled it with a nasty kick of sand in Democrats' face.

How else can you describe the pretext for this fishing expedition other than "You started it"? If our guy got embroiled in impeachment and protracted legal proceedings during election season, well then, damn it, so will yours.

Whereas Democrats began the first Trump impeachment inquiry after it was revealed that he tried to extort a political favor from the president of Ukraine in exchange for military aid, and the second impeachment after an insurrection, the Biden inquiry is proceeding with no clear evidence of any misdeeds by the president.

This is just the latest asymmetric tit-for-tat by Republicans.

Even many Republicans in Congress don't buy into this kind of baloney, as we've learned from a series of Washington confessionals and from several Republicans who have questioned whether their side has the goods or if this is the best use of their time. As Kevin McCarthy announced the impeachment inquiry, you could almost see his wispy soul sucked out Dementor-style, joining whatever ghostly remains of Paul Ryan's abandoned integrity still wander the halls of Congress.

But this isn't the first time we've witnessed this kind of sorry perversion of Democratic precedent. What Democrats do first in good faith, Republicans repeat in bad faith. Time and again, partisan steps that Democrats take with caution are transmogrified into extraordinary retaliation by Republicans.

And so, Al Gore's challenge of the 2000 election results, ending in his decorous acceptance of the results after a bitter court ruling, is reincarnated as an unhinged insurrection at the Capitol in 2021.

In exchange for the brief moment after the 2004 election when some Democrats claimed irregularities with the Ohio ballot process, we get Republicans taking baseless claims of voter fraud in 2020 to thermonuclear level.

In June 1992, Biden, then chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, called on President George H.W. Bush not to nominate any candidate for the Supreme Court until after the fall election, saying it was "fair" and "essential" to keep what could be a sharp political conflict out of the campaign's final days — as well as the nomination process itself. Of course, with no vacancy at hand, the stakes in that instance were nonexistent.

The impeachment effort is just the latest G.O.P. abuse of Democratic precedent.

But just after Justice Antonin Scalia died in February 2016, Mitch McConnell took the extraordinary position that he would not submit any Supreme Court nominee from President Barack Obama for Senate consideration in an election year. By ignoring that nominee, Merrick Garland, Republicans maintained a conservative majority on the court. McConnell, of course, disingenuously cited the "Biden rule" in his decision.

It is a bitter paradox that Biden, long a careful moderate, has suffered the brunt of this vindictive one-upmanship. The trouble with being around for so long, as Biden has been, is that there is always someone who remembers "the time when" and holds a grudge.

And while there's no direct connection between the 1987 defeat of Ronald Reagan's nomination of Robert Bork for the Supreme Court and the current impeachment inquiry, I can't help thinking that the rage that set off among conservative Republicans helped ignite the flames of animosity that have only intensified over the years, yet another instance of a Democratic precedent being grossly misinterpreted as a political ploy rather than as a principled stand.

It was Biden, who as chair of the Judiciary Committee and candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination, was compelled to lead the fight against Bork. There was plenty of reason to block Bork: He had opposed the Civil Rights Act of 1964; the principle of one person, one vote; the judicial protection of gay rights; and the idea of a constitutional right to privacy as the foundation of not only Roe v. Wade but also the right to contraception.

But the fight made even some Democrats nervous. "Will Democrats Self-Destruct on Bork?" the liberal columnist Mark Shields asked.

At that time, for one party to lead the fight to reject a Supreme Court nominee on ideological grounds was extraordinary. The vehemence with which some senators, like Ted Kennedy, approached it exacerbated the rancor. This sort of process became known as "Borking," which, for Republicans, meant using someone's record to destroy his character. To their minds, even though six Republicans voted against Bork, Democrats had politicized and poisoned the nomination process.

It's hard not to see the unhinged attempt to take down Biden now as some kind of warped reincarnation of "Borking," yet another twisted abuse of Democratic precedent.

The misdeeds Trump committed in office clearly warranted an unprecedented double impeachment. They certainly did not warrant this inquiry into Biden.

We are left to hope that the effort will now blow up in the G.O.P.'s face. Considering the shameless stuntathon of today's House Republicans, this may be the closest we get to what's fair.

COLUMNIST | PAUL KRUGMAN

Why Kevin McCarthy Can't Do His Job

THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE is the only congressional officer mentioned in the Constitution, other than a temporary Senate officer to preside when the vice president can't. The speaker's job isn't defined, but surely it includes passing legislation that keeps the federal government running.

But Kevin McCarthy, the current speaker, isn't doing that job. Indeed, at this point it's hard to see how he can pass any bill maintaining federal funding, let alone one the Senate, controlled by Democrats, will agree to. So we seem to be headed for a federal shutdown at the end of this month, with many important government activities suspended until further notice.

Why? McCarthy is a weak leader, especially compared with Nancy Pelosi, his formidable predecessor. But even a superb leader would probably be unable to transcend the dynamics of a party that has been extremist for a generation but has now gone beyond extremism to nihilism.

And yes, this is a Republican problem. Any talk about dysfunction in "Congress," or "partisanship," simply misinforms the public. Crises like the one McCarthy now faces didn't happen under Pelosi, even though she also had a very narrow majority. I'll come back to that contrast. First, let me make a different comparison — between the looming shutdown of 2023 and the shutdowns of 1995-96, when Newt Gingrich was speaker.

If you had told me back then that I'd someday hold up Gingrich as a model of rationality, I wouldn't have believed you. But hear me out.

Back in 1995, while Gingrich's tactics — his willingness to employ blackmail as a political strategy — were new and dangerous, he had an actual policy goal: He wanted to force major cuts in federal spending.

Furthermore, Gingrich tried to go where the money was. The federal government is an insurance company with an army: The great bulk of nonmilitary spending is on the big safety-net programs, that is, Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security. And Gingrich in fact sought deep cuts in Medicare and Medicaid.

He didn't get them, and the government's role in promoting health insurance coverage eventually expanded greatly — although Medicare has been surprisingly successful at containing costs. Still, Gingrich's goals were at least coherent.

McCarthy, in his desperate efforts to appease his party's hard-liners, has acted as if their refusal to approve federal funding is a Gingrich-like demand for reduced federal spending. He tried to pass a continuing resolution — a bill that would temporarily keep the money flowing — that involved deep cuts to certain parts of the federal government.

But there are three notable aspects to this attempt. First, even if he had managed to pass that resolution, it would have been dead on arrival in the Senate.

Second, unlike Gingrich back then, McCarthy tried to go where the money *isn't*, slashing nonmilitary discretionary spending. That's a fairly small part of the federal budget. It's also a spending category that has already been subject to more than a decade of austerity, ever since President Barack Obama made concessions to Republicans during the debt ceiling confrontation of 2011. There just isn't any significant blood to be gotten out of this stone.

Finally, even this extreme proposal wasn't extreme enough for Republican hard-liners. I liked what one representative told Politico: "Some of these folks would vote against the Bible because there's not enough Jesus in it." The point is that the party's right wing isn't actually interested in governing; it's all about posturing, and the budget fight is a temper tantrum rather than a policy dispute.

If the G.O.P. were anything like a normal party, McCarthy would give up on the right-wingers, gather up the saner Republican representatives — it would be misleading to call them "moderates" — and make a deal with Democrats. But that would almost surely cost him the speakership, and in general more or less the whole G.O.P. is terrified of the hard-liners, so the party's positions end up being dictated by its most extreme faction.

As I said, all of this is very different from what happens on the other side of the aisle. You still sometimes see analyses that treat Democrats on the left and Republicans on the right as equivalent, but they're nothing

How to make Newt Gingrich look good in retrospect.

alike. The progressive wing of the Democratic Party is, in fact, interested in policy; it tries to push the party's leadership in its direction, but it's willing to take what it can get. That's why Pelosi, with only a narrow majority during Biden's first two years, was nonetheless able to get enacted landmark bills on infrastructure, climate and technology, while McCarthy can't even keep the government running.

Now, a protracted shutdown would be highly disruptive, and if past confrontations are a guide, the public would blame Republicans — which is what led Gingrich to back down in the 1990s. But it's not clear that McCarthy, or whoever replaces him if he's overthrown, would be willing or even able to make a deal that reopens the government. How does this end?

LETTERS

Acting on Worries About Climate Change

TO THE EDITOR:

Re "America Still Stands in the Way of Solving Climate Change," by Lydia Millet (Opinion guest essay, Sept. 20):

"The race to decarbonize should be embraced" — a brilliant line from Ms. Millet's essay — speaks volumes. Earlier this week an estimated 75,000 people marched in New York City calling for an end to fossil fuels. This movement desperately needs to become a united, feel-good process.

Ditching fossil fuels encompasses a lot. Financially, we need to eliminate fossil fuel subsidies and investments. We need to dramatically cut the extraction of dirty fuels. Plans for new infrastructure like pipelines and compressor stations need to be abandoned. These changes will be hard.

But the list of pluses for decarbonization is long. Our world will be quieter, less polluted and more equitable. Human health will improve. A plethora of jobs will be generated. Most important, our disrupted climate will start to stabilize, ensuring a more sustainable future.

Leaders at the forefront of this change will need to be brave. The need to educate everyone about the potential ravages of a changing climate has never been greater. Quite simply, as Ms. Millet suggests, we need to embrace this change. We have little choice!

SALLY COURTRIGHT
ALBANY, N.Y.

TO THE EDITOR:

On Sunday, tens of thousands of demonstrators protested in Manhattan, blaming President Biden for the shortcomings of U.S. climate policy. Echoing them, Lydia Millet called America "the colossus that stands in the way of a planetary crackdown on emissions," and demanded that Mr. Biden take decisive, unilateral action against fossil fuels.

Yes, Mr. Biden could declare a climate emergency, ban fossil fuel exports, cancel oil leases and stop fossil fuel investing abroad. After being immediately halted by conservative judges, those emergency actions would go down in flames on 6-to-3 votes in the Supreme Court.

This is the court that limited the Environmental Protection Agency's ability to restrict power plant emissions under the Clean Air Act.

Presidents have cultivated the image that they are all-powerful. But critics are fooling themselves if they think that Mr. Biden, acting alone, could be the solution. In reality, his options are very limited.

DAN FARBER
OAKLAND, CALIF.

The writer is a law professor and faculty director at the Center for Law, Energy and the Environment at the University of California, Berkeley. He is the author of "Contested Ground: How to Understand the Limits of Presidential Power."

TO THE EDITOR:

Re "That Feeling of Climate Doom? It's Called Eco-Anxiety" (Europe Dispatch, Sept. 17):

Feeling anxious about climate change isn't a pathology. It's an accurate reflection of the situation we're in. Making climate anxiety a mental health issue is just another form of climate change denial.

Actually, it's *not* feeling extremely anxious that's the pathology. It's called delusion. And on the evidence of their own lack of action on climate change, most of the world's financial and political leaders suffer from it.

STUART WALDMAN, NEW YORK

A 9/11 Widow's Plea to Biden Over a Saudi Treaty

TO THE EDITOR:

Re "U.S. Officials and Saudis Are Exploring a Mutual Defense Treaty" (front page, Sept. 20):

My husband, Kenneth, along with almost 3,000 other innocent people, was murdered by terrorists while he was at work. The weapons used by the terrorists were hijacked planes that they crashed into buildings. Fifteen of the 19 hijackers were from Saudi Arabia, as was Osama bin Laden himself.

We, the victims' family members, have been trying to hold these terrorists accountable in court since Sept. 11, 2001. Saudi Arabia has hidden behind sovereign immunity for all these years, and we have been stymied in court because the evidence against the alleged perpetrators is mostly classified. This works to the benefit of Saudi Arabia and works against the victims.

President Biden, are you seriously considering giving even more protections to those who allegedly aided and abetted in killing our loved ones in cold blood on 9/11?

Before any defense agreements with Saudi Arabia are ever reached, shouldn't we first be allowed to hold the kingdom accountable for what occurred on the fateful day of 9/11?

Are you trying to telegraph a message to the world that it's OK to attack the United States, just wait a couple of decades, and all will be forgotten?

Defense agreements, and a lack of accountability from those who killed our loved ones, will never be forgotten or forgiven by the families of those who were burned alive in those buildings.

LORIE VAN AUKEN
EAST BRUNSWICK, N.J.

Snubbing Zelensky

TO THE EDITOR:

Re "McCarthy Declines to Allow Ukraine Leader to Address House" (news article, Sept. 21):

Kevin McCarthy, the speaker of the House, once again demonstrates his fear of his own members and his willingness to take whatever position will allow him to keep his job.

If Mr. McCarthy opposes further aid to Ukraine, so be it. But to snub President Volodymyr Zelensky and prevent him from making his case before the entire House is a slap in the face, not to Mr. Zelensky, who is stronger than Mr. McCarthy and well able to take the hit, but to the other 434 members of the House, who might want to show a little courtesy and hear what the man has to say.

JOHN T. DILLON
WEST CALDWELL, N.J.

Garland at Hearing

TO THE EDITOR:

Re "Angry Garland Rebuffs G.O.P. on Biden Case" (front page, Sept. 21):

I presume that at a hearing before the House Judiciary Committee, Attorney General Merrick Garland chose to remain professional instead of responding: "With all due respect, is there a question you would like me to answer so we can have an actual discussion, or are you interested only in voicing unsubstantiated accusations to score points?"

CLIFFORD REISS
RIVERVIEW, FLA.

Birmingham Bombing

TO THE EDITOR:

Re "What We Owe Survivors of Racial Terror," by Charles M. Blow (column, Sept. 14):

Ten years ago, as a civil rights historian and an activist, I led a nationwide initiative to commemorate the four martyred girls in the Birmingham bombing — Addie Mae Collins, Denise McNair, Carole Robertson and Cynthia Wesley — on its 50th anniversary. The initiative was planned so that the girls' heroic sacrifice wouldn't get marginalized by the larger commemoration of the August 1963 March on Washington (I attended as a young boy).

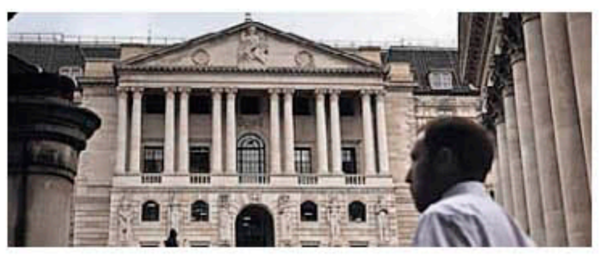
I deeply regret that we did not include Sarah Collins Rudolph, who barely survived, in the commemoration of her sister and friends. It is past time to honor Ms. Rudolph. The just way to do that is to raise funds for her medical expenses.

Please write to your senators and representatives, urging them to provide funding in whatever way they can. Long overdue as it is, let's make this a nationwide effort to secure restitution and justice for the courageous Sarah Collins Rudolph.

STEWART BURNS
NORTH ADAMS, MASS.

The writer is the author of "To the Mountaintop: Martin Luther King Jr.'s Mission and the Movement That Made Him."

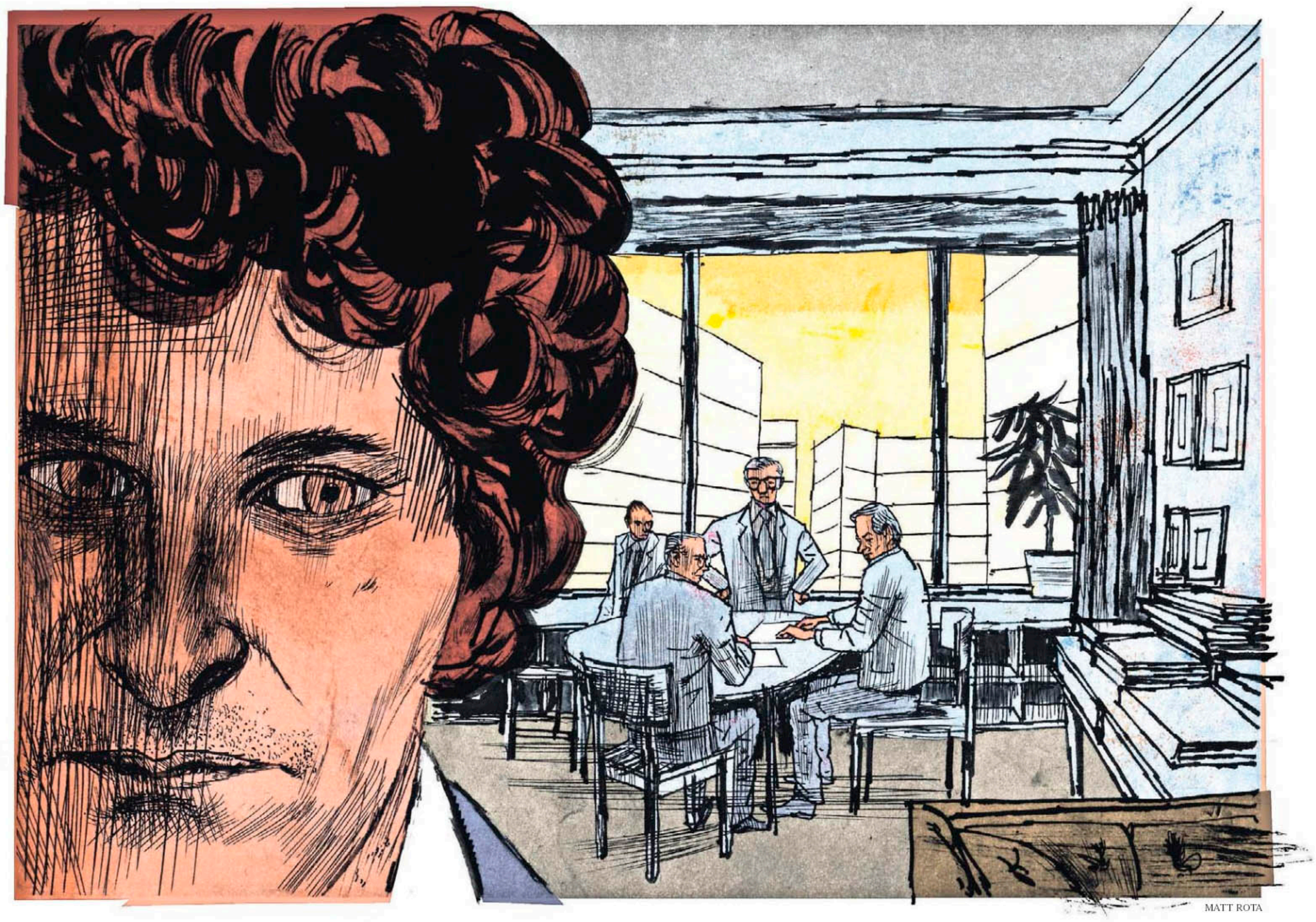
3 LEGAL
In a lawsuit against Google, a family says that the Google Maps app sent a man to his death off a collapsed bridge.



5 INTERNATIONAL
Bank of England officials narrowly voted to keep interest rates steady for the first time in nearly two years.

7 SPORTS
Fighting has been part of hockey since the game's inception in the 1800s. But for how much longer?

Tangled History of Lawyers In the Rise and Fall of FTX



MATT ROTA

The jailed founder of the failed crypto exchange says Sullivan & Cromwell, the New York law firm managing its bankruptcy, has downplayed its role in the company's implosion.

By DAVID YAFFE-BELLANY and MATTHEW GOLDSTEIN

Just before FTX collapsed in November, one of its outside lawyers at the law firm Sullivan & Cromwell emailed a colleague at another firm, insisting that the cryptocurrency exchange's finances were stable.

Rumors of FTX's demise were "silliness," the lawyer, Andrew Dietderich, wrote. "FTX is rock solid, doesn't use customer funds or take credit risk at all," he said.

Four days later, FTX filed for bankruptcy. Mr. Dietderich quickly arranged for Sam Bankman-Fried, the exchange's founder, to step down so that a new chief executive, John Jay Ray III, a specialist in corporate turnarounds, could lead the company. When Mr. Ray needed lawyers to manage the bankruptcy, a lucrative assignment, he asked a judge to appoint the same ones who had helped get him the job: Sullivan & Cromwell.

Now, with Mr. Bankman-Fried set to go on trial next month on fraud charges stemming from FTX's failure, Sullivan & Cromwell's tangled history with the exchange is drawing scrutiny — especially from Mr. Bankman-Fried's lawyers and family.

For months, Mr. Bankman-Fried has attacked Sullivan & Cromwell in court papers and on social media, arguing that the firm's lawyers set him up as the fall guy for FTX's implosion while downplaying their own involvement with the exchange. The dispute became even more personal this week when FTX sued Mr. Bankman-Fried's parents, seeking to claw back millions of dollars and claiming the exchange had operated like a "family business."

Criticism of Sullivan & Cromwell has become more widespread recently, as the firm has racked up over $100 million in legal fees from FTX's bankruptcy. This summer, its lawyers clashed with representatives for FTX's millions of disgruntled creditors over the firm's legal strategy and the pace of its

CONTINUED ON PAGE B4

Big 3 Strike Offers Tesla Opportunity And Pitfalls

By JACK EWING

The United Automobile Workers strike against the Michigan automakers would seem to be nothing but good news for Tesla, the electric vehicle maker that has upended the industry and stolen customers from Ford Motor, General Motors and Stellantis, which owns Jeep and Ram.

Unencumbered by an activist union, Tesla can take advantage of the work stoppages to add to its substantial lead in battery technology and software. As the three established automakers face increases in labor costs and struggle to master electric vehicles, Tesla can twist the knife by reducing car prices because it is much more profitable than most automakers.

But the U.A.W.'s determination to secure a big victory for its members, amid a nationwide resurgence in union activism, harbors risks for Tesla and Elon Musk, its chief executive, who has attacked and ridiculed unions on his social media network, X, formerly Twitter.

The U.A.W., which has failed to organize Tesla's factory workers in the past, is gearing up for another attempt, a top union official said.

"There is a group of Tesla workers who are actively talking about forming a union and creating the best representation they can for themselves and their co-workers

CONTINUED ON PAGE B3

Hong Kong Reaches Out To Reassure

By ALEXANDRA STEVENSON

HONG KONG — Isolated from the world and pulled closer into Beijing's orbit over the last three years, Hong Kong is finding that its fortunes are tied more than ever to China.

The city's stock market, which is seen as a proxy for China's economy, is among the world's worst performing this year. The rivers of money that flowed into companies, minting new wealth, have slowed to a trickle.

And there is the gnawing feeling that the once-vibrant international city that staked its reputation on being separate from China has itself become more like the rest of China.

To counter this sentiment, officials are making a big push for investors overseas, with trips to Europe and the United States. Paul Chan, the city's finance chief, is visiting Paris and London this week and will then travel to Berlin and Frankfurt before moving on to the United States.

Mr. Chan, however, is in a tight

CONTINUED ON PAGE B5

Fed Officials Expect High Rates Will Last

By BEN CASSELMAN and JEANNA SMIALEK

The era of ultralow interest rates may be over. At the very least, policymakers don't expect the type of low borrowing costs that prevailed before the pandemic to return anytime soon.

The Federal Reserve decided this week to leave interest rates unchanged at their highest level in two decades, and left the door open to raising rates again before the end of the year. But an even more significant if subtle change lurked in its freshly released economic projections.

Fed officials do not expect rates to go much higher — the next quarter-point increase is likely to be the last, if they make even that. But they do expect borrowing costs to stay elevated for years to come. Policymakers expect their benchmark short-term interest rate to stay above 5 percent next year, and to end 2025 at nearly 4 percent, the estimates showed. That would be roughly double where they were at the end of 2019.

Even in 2026 — when, the Fed hopes, inflation will have been fully stamped out and economic growth will have settled back into its longer-run trend — policymakers expect rates to remain well above the levels that prevailed before the pandemic.

Analysts sum up a new worldview: 'Higher for longer.'

In other words, higher rates may be here to stay for years.

That conclusion stems in part from a simple observation: The Fed has raised interest rates aggressively over the past year and a half, yet the economy has barely blinked. That suggests that after years in which even the slightest increase in rates threatened to bring growth to a halt, the economy might at last be able to withstand higher borrowing costs.

"They are surprised at how strong the economy has been this year despite the large amount of tightening the Fed has done," said Gabriel Chodorow-Reich, a professor of economics at Harvard, referring to Fed officials. "The staying power suggests that rates may need to be higher to weigh on growth, and that "Fed policy hasn't been quite as tight as we thought it was."

On Wall Street, analysts have begun summing up the Fed's new worldview in a simple phrase: "Higher for longer."

A new era of higher rates would

CONTINUED ON PAGE B3

PETE MAROVICH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Jerome H. Powell, the Fed chair, said economic forecasts are notoriously unreliable, especially in the longer run.

The Digest

COMPANIES

Bloomberg Outlines Plans for Succession

As he kicks off a new campaign to use his wealth to block the construction of petrochemical plants, Michael R. Bloomberg outlined the fate of his company Bloomberg L.P. after he dies. He said his Bloomberg Philanthropies foundation would inherit his multi-billion-dollar company and then eventually sell it.

"At 81 years old, common sense says I should have succession plans," the former New York City mayor said at the Climate Summit hosted by The New York Times in Manhattan on Thursday.

"I give virtually all of the company's profits to the foundation, and the foundation gave away last year $1.7 billion," he added. "This year it will be a little bit more than that. But when I die, the foundation inherits the company. They, because of the tax laws, will have to get rid of it, sell it someplace or other over the first five years."

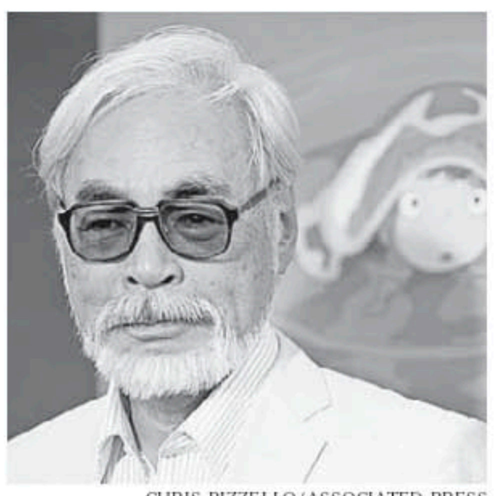
Mr. Bloomberg holds an 88 percent stake in the company behind Wall Street's favorite data terminals, which generated revenue of more than $12 billion in 2022. He said he had no plans to sell the company in the immediate future and hoped to keep working for at least three to five more years.

Mr. Bloomberg has recently set his sites on blocking new petrochemical plants that make fertilizer, plastics and packaging. He said that he chose to focus on this arm of fighting climate change because it was "irrational" to think the entire fossil fuel sector would simply disappear.

"We are not going to get away from using oil for the next 10 or 15 years," he said. *REMY TUMIN*

ACQUISITIONS

Famed Animation Studio To Join Japan Network


CHRIS PIZZELLO/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Studio Ghibli, the famed Japanese animation studio of Hayao Miyazaki, right, will become a subsidiary of Nippon Television Network Corp., both sides said Thursday.

Succession worries had been a priority at Ghibli, as Mr. Miyazaki has turned 82, and the producer Toshio Suzuki is 75.

The boards of both companies agreed at meetings Thursday that the major commercial broadcast network will become Studio Ghibli's top shareholder, with a 42.3 percent stake. Financial details were not given.

Nippon TV said it would send executives to support Ghibli's management, while honoring its creative independence so it can focus on animation and other artistic projects.

The deal was first discussed last year, the companies said., when Mr. Suzuki asked the Nippon TV executive Yoshikuni Sugiyama for help in managing Ghibli. Sugiyama promised to give support.

Mr. Miyazaki's son Goro is also an animation director and has been mentioned as a possible successor. But he had expressed doubts, saying the responsibility was too great

Ghibli and Nippon TV have collaborated in the past, since "Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind" aired on TV in 1985. Nippon TV has also helped produce various Ghibli works, starting with Mr. Miyazaki's 1989 "Kiki's Delivery Service." It also helped set up the museum devoted to Ghibli works in Tokyo.

Earlier this year, Mr. Miyazaki finished "The Boy and the Heron," completed after seven years. It is based on a book but is also loosely based on Mr. Miyazaki's wartime childhood. *ASSOCIATED PRESS*

S&P 500 INDEX
−1.6%
4,330

DOW JONES INDUSTRIALS
−1.1%
34,070.42

NASDAQ COMPOSITE INDEX
−1.8%
13,223.98

10-YEAR TREASURY YIELD
4.48%
+0.109 points

CRUDE OIL (U.S.)
$89.63
−$0.03

GOLD (N.Y.)
$1,939.60
−$27.50

STOCKS & BONDS

With Interest Rates High, Wall Street Continues to Fall

By The Associated Press

Wall Street fell sharply Thursday in an ugly day for stocks worldwide on expectations that U.S. interest rates will stay high well into next year.

The S&P 500 lost 1.6 percent for its worst day since March. That followed a drop of 0.9 percent from Wednesday after the Federal Reserve indicated it may cut interest rates next year by just half of what it had earlier predicted. The Fed has already raised its main interest rate to levels unseen since 2001, which helps slow inflation, but at the cost of hurting investment prices.

High-growth stocks are typically among the hardest hit by high rates, and Big Tech stocks took the brunt of the pain for a second straight day. The Nasdaq composite dropped 1.8 percent as Amazon fell 4.4 percent, Nvidia dropped 2.9 percent and Telsa lost 2.6 percent. The Dow Jones industrial average dropped 1.1 percent.

Stock prices tend to fall when rates rise because stocks are riskier investments. Why stomach the chance of their big swings when Treasurys are paying more in interest than before? And they're paying much more.

A 10-year Treasury is offering a yield of 4.48 percent, up from 4.40 percent late Wednesday and from only 0.50 percent three years ago. It's near its highest level since 2007.

The two-year Treasury yield, meanwhile, wavered after some mixed reports on the economy. It slipped to 5.14 percent from 5.17 percent late Wednesday after climbing earlier in the morning.

One report showed fewer U.S. workers applied for unemployment benefits last week than expected. It was the lowest number since January and the latest signal of a remarkably resilient job market.

Such a solid labor market helps calm worries about a possible recession. But it may also give U.S. households fuel to keep spending, which could encourage companies to try to raise prices further and keep upward pressure on inflation. That in turn could give the Fed more reason to keep rates higher for longer.

A separate report, meanwhile, suggested manufacturing in the mid-Atlantic region is contracting by much more than economists expected. A third report showed sales of previously occupied U.S. homes were weaker last month than economists expected.

Manufacturing and the housing industry have felt the sting of higher interest rates in particular and have struggled more than the broad job market.

Interest rates may stay high if the Federal Reserve follows through on the latest forecasts from its policymaking officials.

Policymakers have indicated they could raise the federal funds rate one more time this year, then cut it by only half a percentage point from there through 2024. Three months ago, Fed officials were forecasting a full percentage point of cuts could be the most likely path. They want to ensure that inflation gets back down to the Fed's target of 2 percent.

Wednesday's projections may be an indication that "raises the bar for rate cuts next year," according to the Goldman Sachs economist David Mericle. He pushed out his forecast for the first cut in interest rates to the final three months of 2024 after earlier thinking it could happen during the spring.

High rates slow the economy by design and raise the pressure across the financial world. Earlier this spring, they helped lead to three high-profile collapses of U.S. banks. They also hurt prices for all kinds of investments. The hardest hit tend to be those bid up on hopes for big growth far out in the future. That's why tech stocks often swing in particular with expectations for rates.

Cisco Systems also took a hit after it said it would buy Splunk, a cybersecurity company, for roughly $28 billion in cash. Cisco fell 3.9%, while Splunk jumped 20.8%.

On the winning side of Wall Street, FedEx rose 4.5% after it reported stronger profit for the latest quarter than analysts expected.

The S&P 500 Index

Position of the S&P 500 index at 1-minute intervals on Thursday

-- Previous Close: 4,402.20

Source: FactSet THE NEW YORK TIMES

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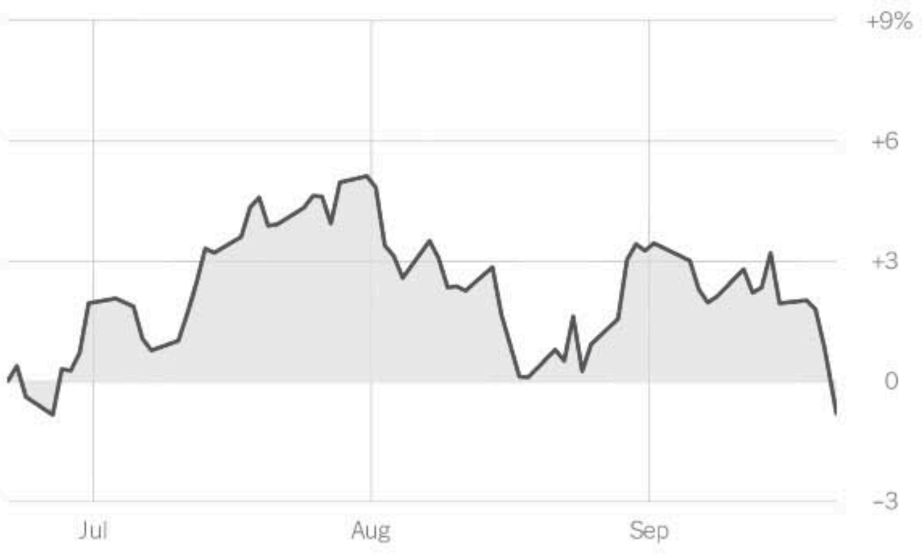
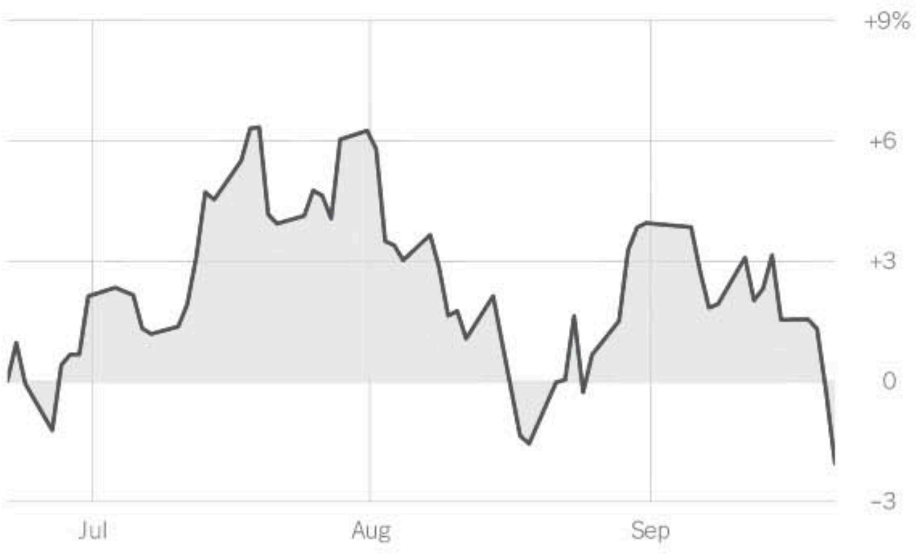
What Happened in Stock Markets Yesterday

POWERED BY FACTSET

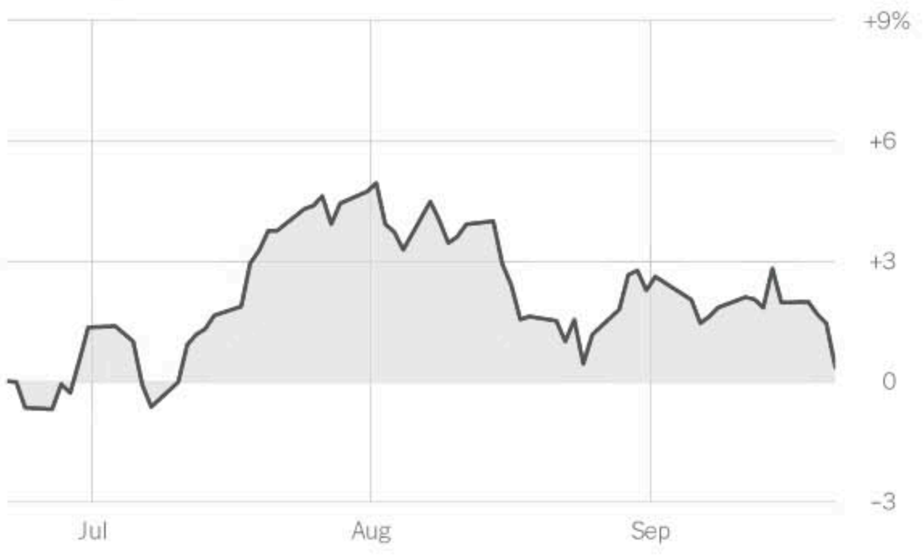
S&P 500 4,330.00 ↓ −1.6%
3 month performance: **−0.8%**



Nasdaq Composite Index 13,223.98 ↓ −1.8%
3 month performance: **−2.1%**



Dow Jones Industrials 34,070.42 ↓ −1.1%
3 month performance: **+0.4%**



Best performers

S&P 500 COMPANIES	CLOSE	CHANGE
1. Fedex Corp (FDX)	$261.85	+4.5%
2. Fox Corp. A (FOXA)	$32.14	+3.2
3. Fox Corp. B (FOX)	$29.59	+3.0
4. Valero Energy (VLO)	$146.30	+2.3
5. Centene (CNC)	$69.54	+2.1
6. Humana (HUM)	$494.06	+1.9
7. UnitedHealth Group (UNH)	$501.14	+1.8
8. Hormel Foods (HRL)	$39.33	+1.4
9. Kraft Heinz (KHC)	$34.49	+1.4
10. Marathon Petroleum (MPC)	$154.77	+1.4

Worst performers

S&P 500 COMPANIES	CLOSE	CHANGE
1. Alexandria Real Est. Equ. (ARE)	$102.93	−8.3%
2. Boston Properties (BXP)	$60.88	−7.1
3. Caesars Entertainment (CZR)	$47.51	−5.3
4. Prologis (PLD)	$114.55	−5.3
5. Dollar Tree (DLTR)	$105.50	−5.2
6. Dollar General (DG)	$109.76	−5.1
7. Charles River Labs Intl (CRL)	$198.15	−5.0
8. SBA Communications (SBAC)	$204.68	−4.8
9. American Tower (AMT)	$169.32	−4.6
10. Quanta Services (PWR)	$186.47	−4.5

Most active

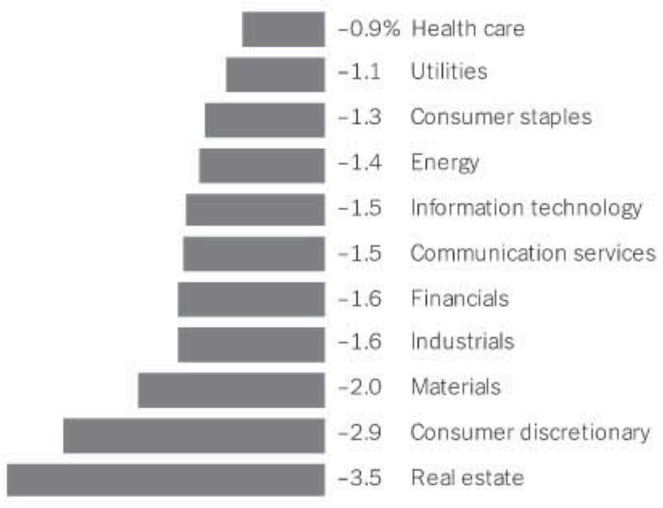
S&P 500 COMPANIES	CLOSE	CHANGE	VOLUME IN MIL.
1. Tesla (TSLA)	$255.70	−2.6%	119
2. Amazon.com (AMZN)	$129.33	−4.4	68
3. Apple (AAPL)	$173.93	−0.9	62
4. Advanced Micro Devices (AMD)	$96.11	−4.2	59
5. Intel Corp (INTC)	$34.65	−0.1	45
6. NVIDIA (NVDA)	$410.17	−2.9	45
7. Ford Motor (F)	$12.20	−1.3	40
8. Bank of America (BAC)	$28.05	−1.8	39
9. Cisco Systems (CSCO)	$53.34	−3.9	37
10. Microsoft (MSFT)	$319.53	−0.4	34

Specialty stocks and commodities

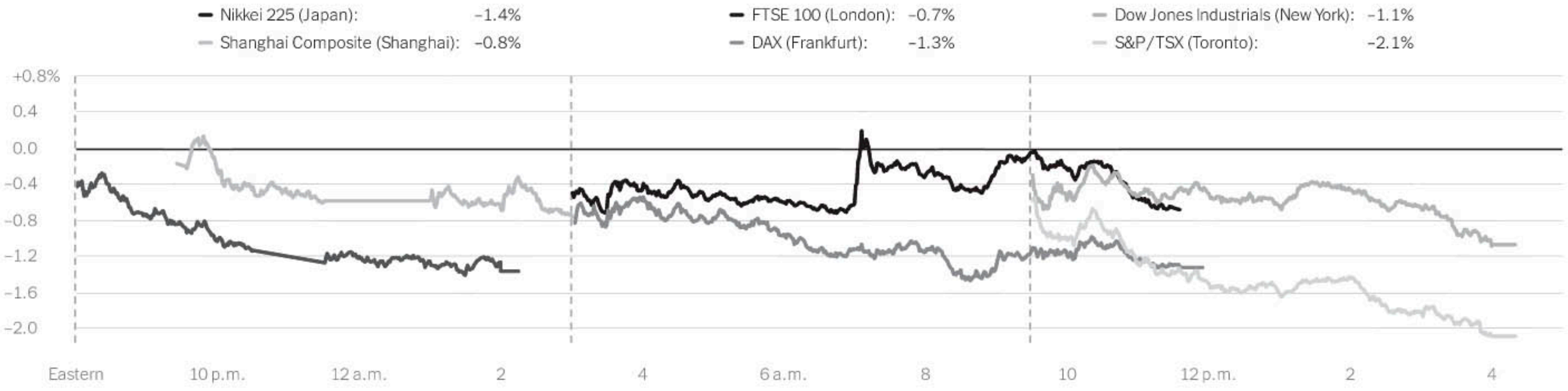
	TOTAL RETURN 1 YR	TOTAL RETURN 5 YRS	TOTAL ASSETS IN BIL.
1. Vanguard Information Technology Index Fund Admiral Shares (VITAX)	+28.5%	+18.2%	64.8
2. Vanguard Real Estate Index Fund Investor Shares (VGSIX)	−7.3	+3.3	61.7
3. Vanguard Health Care Fund Investor Shares (VGHCX)	+12.3	+7.7	47.0
4. Vanguard Health Care Index Fund Admiral Shares (VHCIX)	+7.1	+8.3	19.8
5. T. Rowe Price Health Sciences Fund I Class (THISX)	+3.7	+7.3	15.1
6. Calamos Market Neutral Income Class R6 (CVSOX)	+7.6	+3.5	14.2
7. Fidelity Select Technology Portfolio (FSPTX)	+35.1	+17.3	11.8
8. Fidelity Select Semiconductors Portfolio (FSELX)	+60.1	+27.1	11.5
9. Fidelity Select Software & IT Services Portfolio (FSCSX)	+25.6	+14.1	10.6
10. Columbia Seligman Technology and Information Fund Advisor Class (SCIOX)	+23.1	+18.6	10.5

Source: Morningstar

Sector performance
S&P 500 SECTORS

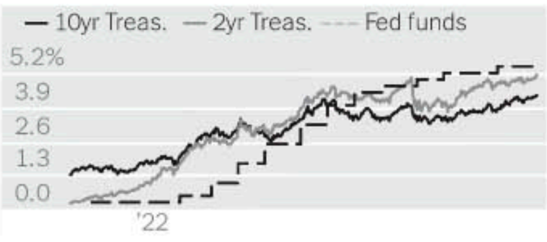


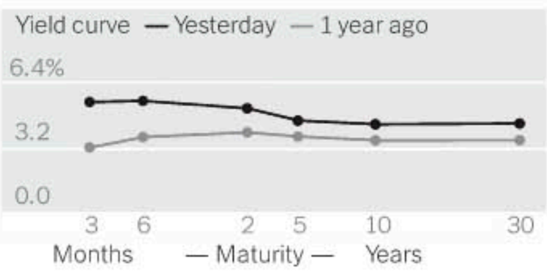
How stock markets fared yesterday in Asia ... **... in Europe** **... and North America**



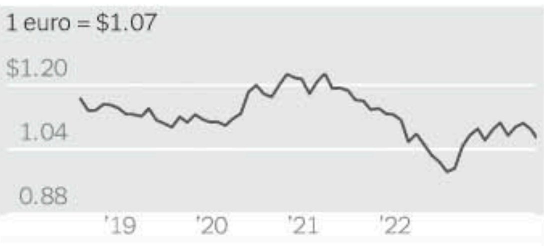
What Is Happening in Other Markets and the Economy

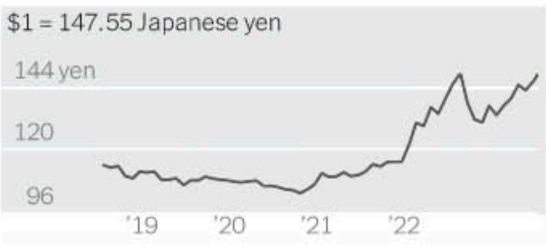
Bonds



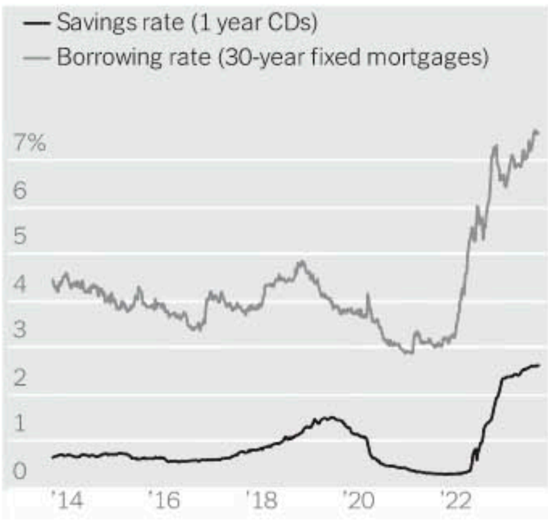


Currencies

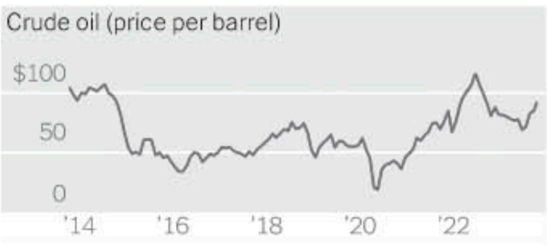


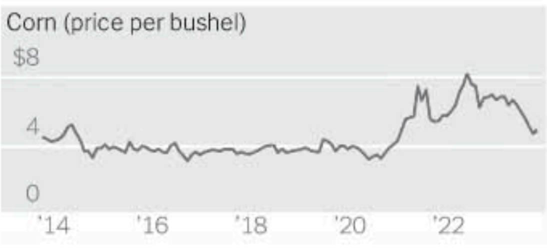


Consumer rates

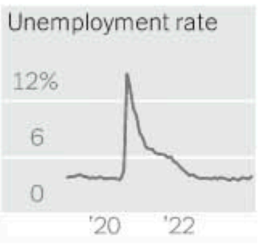


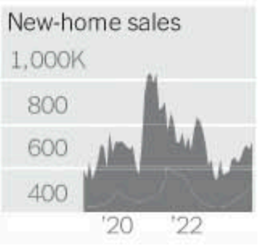
Commodities

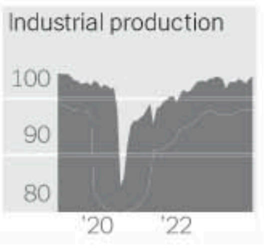




Economy







ECONOMY | AUTOMOBILES

Fed Officials Are Anticipating That High Rates Will Stay Put

FROM FIRST BUSINESS PAGE

be a significant development for many households, especially would-be home buyers dreaming of the return of 3 percent mortgage rates.

The Fed's rate setting trickles through the rest of the economy to make it more expensive to borrow to pay for a car, a house or a business expansion. Mortgage rates, for example, are above 7 percent, up sharply from a low of about 2.7 percent before the Fed's rate moves started.

High rates could also be bad news for sophisticated investors who were raking in big profits by making bets using borrowed cash during the "free money" era that preceded the pandemic. And they could cause problems for borrowers who have big outstanding debt piles that could now reset at higher interest rates — an issue facing both commercial real estate companies and the United States government, which is spending steadily more just to pay interest on its debt.

Investors reacted to the Fed's higher-for-longer prediction glumly. The S&P 500 stock index slumped over 1 percent on Thursday morning, adding to similar losses on Wednesday. Higher interest rates raise costs for consumers and companies. The longer that interest rates remain high, the more those costs rack up, eroding corporate profitability.

It appeared the Fed's message sank in elsewhere in markets, too. Measures of interest rates rose sharply, as did investors' bets on where interest rates will be in the future.

But for the economy as a whole, higher rates could bring some welcome changes.

The Fed's tools for managing the economy didn't work as well in a low-rate world. Officials struggled to boost the economy enough in the years after the 2007-9 recession as even near-zero rates failed to entice borrowers and spur lots of spending. The recovery muddled along at a tepid pace for years. If rates have reset to higher levels, that could make it easier to stimulate growth in times of economic trouble.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MAANSI SRIVASTAVA/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Higher rates would affect would-be home buyers dreaming of the return of 3 percent mortgage rates. The longer that interest rates remain high, the more costs rack up for consumers.

Higher rates could also be good news for savers, who were for years forced to take bigger risks with their cash if they wanted to earn a decent return.

Of course, the Fed's rate predictions may not come true.

Economic forecasts are notoriously unreliable, especially in the longer run — a point Jerome H. Powell, the Fed chair, made repeatedly on Wednesday. If the economic recovery stalls out in coming months and unemployment soars, policymakers could find themselves forced to cut rates more than they currently anticipate.

And even if rates do stay high, there are big questions about whether that change lasts a few years, as the Fed currently predicts, or marks a more permanent shift.

For now, policymakers are forecasting that the pop in interest rates will eventually fade. They kept their estimate of the rate setting that will keep the economy chugging along at a steady and sustainable pace in the longer run — something economists often call the "neutral rate" — unchanged in their projections, at 2.5 percent.

Asked on Wednesday why Fed officials expect rates to remain higher through 2026, Mr. Powell pointed to recent strong economic activity, which he said generally suggested "we have to do more with rates."

But the Fed chair was not yet ready to conclude that the economy has undergone a lasting shift.

"It may of course be that the neutral rate has risen," Mr. Powell said. "You do see people raising their estimates."

Seven of the Fed's 19 policymakers on Wednesday predicted that rates could hover above 2.5 percent in the longer run — the same number as in the last set of forecasts, in June. But four officials said they expected interest rates to settle above 3 percent in the long term, up from two members in June and zero a year ago.

Whether rates are temporarily or permanently elevated matters. If the interest rate that the economy can handle without slowing down has permanently increased, it will take higher borrowing costs to cool the economy if it begins to overheat.

> **'We know it by its works — we only know it by its works.'**
>
> Jerome H. Powell, the Fed chair, about predicting the neutral rate.

That may sound complicated, but the logic is fairly simple: If people expect to pay 3.75 percent interest to get their hands on cash during normal times, then a 5.25 percent rate might scare some of them off. But that same 5.25 percent rate will be a much bigger obstacle if people have built their business models and household finances around a 2.5 percent interest rate world. It could be the difference between tapping the brakes and slamming the pedal to the floor.

Changes in the neutral rate are tough to spot in real time. Many drivers help determine what interest rate the economy can handle: Demographics, government indebtedness, corporate expansion plans and inequality can all push rates up or down.

Economists have models to try to predict the neutral rate, but in practice, they watch to see how growth is reacting to rate moves.

"We know it by its works — we only know it by its works," Mr. Powell said on Wednesday.

Some economists argue that the neutral rate might have moved temporarily higher in the aftermath of the pandemic, but are skeptical of a longer-run shift. Big economic trends, such as aging populations and high inequality, have not fundamentally changed.

"I don't think we have a compelling reason to believe" that rates will be higher, said Gauti Eggertsson, an economics professor at Brown University.

Still, a growing number of economists do think that rates are likely to be permanently higher. Huge government debt piles have ramped up demand for borrowed money, for one thing.

"There's just a growing imbalance between tax revenues coming in and spending going out," said Joseph H. Davis, global chief economist at Vanguard. As a result, he added, "longer term, interest rates are not always going to show that pull toward" zero.

There are also more optimistic theories. Daleep Singh, a former Biden administration and New York Fed official now at PGIM Fixed Income, pointed to investments in green energy and new technologies like artificial intelligence as trends that could push both growth and rates higher.

"I think that they did everything but raise the long-term neutral rate," Mr. Singh said of the Fed.

Joe Rennison contributed reporting.

Strike of Big 3 Carmakers Offers Potential Gains and Risks for Tesla and Musk

A nonunion company has an edge, but the U.A.W. is eyeing it.

FROM FIRST BUSINESS PAGE

through collective bargaining," said Mike Miller, the director of the U.A.W.'s Region 6, which includes California and Nevada, where Tesla makes cars and batteries. Tesla also has a large factory in Austin, Texas, not too far from a unionized G.M. factory in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

In an interview, Mr. Miller declined to provide more details or identify the Tesla workers, saying they needed time to prepare before going public. This union organizing effort is separate from a campaign at a Buffalo plant where Tesla makes electric vehicle chargers and employs data entry workers.

But as representatives of the national union demand 40 percent wage increases from the Detroit automakers, along with significant gains in benefits, they are certainly thinking about the signal that any deal would send to nonunion workers at Tesla.

"Clearly the narrative out there is that this can't be good for the Big Three, and if it's not good for the Big Three, it's good for Tesla," said Rahul Kapoor, a professor of management at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania.

But he added, "If I'm an autoworker with wages lower than what Ford and G.M. are paying, and I hear there is a substantial increase, it's very likely I would want to take that into account."

The president of the U.A.W., Shawn Fain, fired a warning shot at Mr. Musk Sunday on CBS News's "Face the Nation."

"Most of these workers in those companies are scraping to get by so that greedy C.E.O.s and greedy people like Elon Musk can build more rocket ships and shoot theirself in outer space," he said.

A lot has changed since 2016, when a group of workers at Tesla's auto assembly plant in Fremont, Calif., began an organizing drive that never acquired enough momentum to come to a vote.

Back then, Tesla was a struggling upstart flirting with bankruptcy. Now, Tesla dominates the market for electric vehicles, with a 60 percent share in the United States. It is worth vastly more on the stock market than the three established U.S. automakers combined. It is arguably in a better position to reward workers than its rivals.

Yet labor organizing is arduous. Activists must get at least 30 percent of workers to sign union cards and force a vote overseen by the National Labor Relations Board. Companies often do all they can to dissuade workers from joining, hiring lawyers and consultants who specialize in defeating union campaigns.

NICK HAGEN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

JIM WILSON/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Above, members of the United Automobile Workers protesting outside the Stellantis headquarters in Auburn Hills, Mich. Left, a delivery of Tesla electric vehicles. With tax credits, many Teslas cost less than comparable gas vehicles.

Even if a majority of workers cast ballots in favor of a union, winning pay increases and better benefits comes only after negotiations that can drag on for years. Amazon workers at a Staten Island warehouse voted in April 2022 to unionize, but Amazon has challenged the result and has yet to begin bargaining on a contract.

Still, Tesla would be a tempting target for unions. The company reported a profit of $2.7 billion on sales of $25 billion in the second quarter, giving it a profit margin of about 11 percent. That margin is more than that of Ford or G.M., even after an exceptionally profitable period for those companies. Stellantis, which was created by the 2021 merger of Fiat Chrysler and Peugeot, reported an 11 percent profit margin in the first six months of the year, but lost market share in the United States.

Tesla's stronger financial performance has allowed it to cut car prices significantly, making it harder for the established carmakers to gain ground in electric vehicles. The least expensive Model 3 sedan costs about $33,000 after federal tax credits, less than comparable gasoline vehicles.

The climate for organized labor is better than it has been for years. President Biden is a big supporter of unions. Hollywood writers and actors are on strike, a high-profile manifestation of labor activism. In August, United Parcel Service employees won their biggest raises ever in a contract negotiated by the Teamsters union.

Tesla did not respond to a request for comment, but Mr. Musk seemed to acknowledge the union threat last week, saying on X that his workers were better off than employees of G.M., Ford and Stellantis. "We pay more than the U.A.W.," he said, although he added that "performance expectations are also higher."

The traditional automakers quarreled with Mr. Musk's math, saying that they pay their workers substantially more and that a big raise would only widen the gap and undermine their ability to invest in electric vehicle and battery factories. Ford says its hourly employees make an average of $112,000 per year, including benefits, compared with about $90,000 at Tesla.

The Ford figures do not include stock options that Tesla grants employees, and that can be worth a lot. Mr. Musk has said that some production workers have become millionaires from their shares in the company.

Stock options can be lucrative but also risky. Tesla has not detailed how often or in what amount it distributes options to rank-and-file workers. In regulatory filings, the company has said the options that those workers receive have a vesting period, meaning that employees must remain at the company for a certain period to cash them in.

Tesla workers may lose their options if they are fired or forced to quit because of injury or poor health, said Bryan Schwartz, a lawyer in Oakland, Calif., who has represented the company's employees in lawsuits against the company.

"There are lots of issues with options to the degree workers can really count on them," Mr. Schwartz said.

Stock awards fluctuate in value along with Tesla's share price. The stock peaked at more than $400 in late 2021, plummeted to a little more than $100 last year and rebounded this year to $270. The uncertainty may be unsettling for workers trying to make mortgage payments and pay for child care.

"If I was a Tesla worker, with all these other companies making E.V.s, I would prefer a wage," said Rick Eckstein, a professor of sociology at Villanova University who follows labor issues.

Tesla has a reputation as a tough place to work, with long hours and punishing deadlines. Mr. Schwartz has sued Tesla on behalf of Black employees who say they faced discrimination in promotions and work assignments and were subject to racist abuse. Tesla has denied the accusations.

Any union drive would face forceful opposition from Mr. Musk. The National Labor Relations Board has found that Mr. Musk illegally threatened employees in 2018 by implying they would lose their stock options if they voted to unionize. The labor board also found that Tesla illegally fired one of the lead organizers.

An appeals court upheld the board's decision. Tesla, which argues that Mr. Musk and the company did nothing wrong, is appealing the court ruling.

Without a doubt, the strike poses huge risks for the Detroit automakers, which were slow to take Tesla seriously and stand to lose precious time they need to catch up.

"The real winner in the U.A.W. strike will likely be the auto company that has been winning all along," Gary Black, managing partner of the Future Fund, an investment firm that owns Tesla stock, said on X.

But any schadenfreude among Tesla investors could be brief.

"The strike could be a bellwether," said Mr. Eckstein of Villanova. "It's a hot time in the labor movement."

COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

INVESTMENT PROPERTIES (600)

Investment Properties Other Areas 605

Downtown West Palm Beach
Two City Plaza Work/Live Units
High Profile Location
Modern Luxury BLDG/Valet
$1.175M - $1.695M
Luxe Life Realty
701 S. Olive Ave 114
WPB, FL 33401
561.907.8155

LEGAL

The Tangled History of the Lawyers in the Rise and Fall of FTX

FROM FIRST BUSINESS PAGE

efforts to recover billions in missing assets.

"They were involved before the bankruptcy," said Sunil Kavuri, an FTX creditor who lost more than $2 million in the collapse. "They should have been aware of what was going on."

The dispute over Sullivan & Cromwell's relationship with FTX shows the range of powerful institutions that were eager to help Mr. Bankman-Fried during his rapid rise, even as he resisted basic due diligence and eschewed traditional corporate governance. And it offers a preview of a conflict that may unfold at Mr. Bankman-Fried's trial in Manhattan, where he is expected to shift some of the blame for FTX's bankruptcy to Sullivan & Cromwell and a second law firm that advised him, Fenwick & West.

In court filings, Mr. Bankman-Fried's lawyers have suggested that they may raise a so-called advice of counsel defense to argue that those firms approved many of FTX's actions. Prosecutors have argued that the judge overseeing the trial should not permit Mr. Bankman-Fried to blame his lawyers, because the founder often lied about how his business was using its money. They also said he should have to disclose whether he relied on legal advice from his parents, who are longtime Stanford law professors.

HAIYUN JIANG/THE NEW YORK TIMES

JEFFERSON SIEGEL FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

John Jay Ray III, above, who is now leading FTX, asked a judge to appoint Sullivan & Cromwell to help manage the exchange's bankruptcy. Left, Sam Bankman-Fried's mother, Barbara Fried, asked a legal ethics scholar to assess the firm's conduct.

A spokesman for FTX said Mr. Bankman-Fried's claims were "a biased story line" intended to unfairly blame the professionals trying to recover money. A representative for Sullivan & Cromwell declined to comment. In court, the law firm has said that FTX was never a "regular client," and that the firm had put in place procedures to guard against conflicts of interest during the bankruptcy.

A spokesman for Mr. Bankman-Fried declined to comment. The FTX founder has pleaded not guilty to charges that he orchestrated a scheme to funnel billions in customer money into venture investments, real estate purchases and political donations. His trial is scheduled to begin on Oct. 3.

One of the oldest law firms in New York, Sullivan & Cromwell began handling legal matters for FTX in summer 2021 after one of its partners, Ryne Miller, was hired as general counsel of FTX.US, the exchange's American arm.

Over the next year and a half, the firm worked on 20 legal matters for FTX and its sister hedge fund, Alameda Research, court records show, including discussions with federal regulators at the Commodity Futures Trading Commission. Sullivan & Cromwell received a total of about $8.5 million for the work.

Mr. Bankman-Fried has said that beyond those specific matters, he worked out of Sullivan & Cromwell's offices in New York while visiting from FTX's Bahamas headquarters. And when FTX started teetering in November, Mr. Dietderich emailed a lawyer working on the bankruptcy of Voyager Digital, a crypto firm that FTX was trying to acquire, to assure him that the exchange "doesn't lend" its customers' money.

It turned out he was wrong. As FTX plunged into crisis the next day, Mr. Miller sought a $4 million retainer for Sullivan & Cromwell so the firm could work on a possible bankruptcy filing, according to messages he sent at the time. Soon, Sullivan & Cromwell lawyers alerted the authorities to possible criminal malfeasance at FTX, while Mr. Dietderich encouraged Mr. Bankman-Fried to let Mr. Ray take over the exchange.

In essence, Sullivan & Cromwell worked both sides of the crisis. When FTX was a darling of the corporate and political elite, the firm's lawyers helped Mr. Bankman-Fried navigate Washington as he pushed to loosen regulations. After FTX failed, Sullivan & Cromwell worked closely with federal prosecutors, supplying them with key corporate records.

In January, the U.S. trustee assigned to FTX's bankruptcy raised the prospect of removing Sullivan & Cromwell from the case, citing its failure to disclose all of its past work for FTX. Around the same time, four U.S. senators released a letter arguing that Sullivan & Cromwell had a conflict of interest because the firm might bear some responsibility for FTX's failure. But the trustee backed down after the firm made a more detailed disclosure, and a judge allowed the lawyers to continue overseeing the bankruptcy, saying he saw "no evidence of any actual conflict."

Mr. Bankman-Fried has remained fixated on Sullivan & Cromwell. His lawyers have argued that the firm is providing evidence to the prosecutors that reflects poorly on Mr. Bankman-Fried, while withholding material that could help the defense. Prosecutors have denied that claim, writing in court papers that FTX and its lawyers "have been responding to the government's document requests voluntarily."

After Mr. Bankman-Fried's arrest, his mother, Barbara Fried, contacted one of her Stanford colleagues, the legal ethics scholar Bill Simon, and asked him to evaluate Sullivan & Cromwell's conduct in the bankruptcy. Mr. Simon, a family friend, spent about nine hours discussing the case with Mr. Bankman-Fried in June, he said in an interview, before writing an unpublished article criticizing the firm, which he shared with The New York Times.

"It is hard to see how the lawyers could have done their jobs during the period in which they represented FTX," he wrote, without familiarizing themselves with practices that "are now condemned as irresponsible or worse."

Rebecca Roiphe, a former prosecutor and a professor at New York Law School, said it was fair to raise questions about potential conflicts of interest when a law firm represented a company both before and during a government investigation that might involve related work.

"But this is not uncommon and doesn't necessarily prove wrongdoing," she said, adding that Mr. Simon had asked her to review his article.

At the same time that Sullivan & Cromwell has clashed with Mr. Bankman-Fried, the firm has faced pushback from FTX's creditors. They have complained that the law firm has failed to maximize proceeds from the sale of the exchange's assets. So far, the lawyers say they have recovered about $7 billion, but it's unclear how much of that will be returned to customers, who have filed $16 billion in claims, court filings show.

The dispute spilled into public in July when a group appointed to represent FTX's creditors in the case said Sullivan & Cromwell had ignored its suggestions about how to resolve the bankruptcy. The law firm responded that some creditors were engaging in "unprofessional conduct" — the lawyers had been left perturbed after a meeting in which at least one creditor used a four-letter word to express frustration, two people familiar with the exchange said.

None of those conflicts have stemmed the flow of payments to Sullivan & Cromwell, which has more than 200 lawyers, paralegals and support staff members working on FTX's bankruptcy, the most senior of whom charge $2,165 an hour.

In its most recent monthly bill, Sullivan & Cromwell said it was owed more than $10 million for its work on the bankruptcy, including over 100 charges for meetings, calls or correspondence with the federal prosecutors pursuing Mr. Bankman-Fried.

Family Files Suit Over Google Maps After Man Drives Off Collapsed Bridge

By JENNY GROSS

The family of a North Carolina man who drowned last year after he drove off a collapsed bridge while following Google Maps directions has sued Google for negligence, saying that the company's failure to update its maps led directly to his death.

Philip Paxson, 47, a medical device salesman, was on his way home from his daughter's camping-themed ninth birthday party in Hickory, N.C., on Sept. 30, 2022, navigating a rainy night on unfamiliar roads, when he drove off a collapsed roadway into a creek and drowned, according to the lawsuit, which was filed in Wake County Superior Court on Tuesday.

Alicia Paxson, his wife, also sued two businesses and an individual who the lawsuit says owned, controlled or were responsible for the collapsed bridge, which was unmarked, with no barricades.

Mrs. Paxson had taken their two daughters home from the party in her car, while Mr. Paxson stayed late to clean up and drove separately, she said in an interview.

"This is horrific, what our family is going through," she said.

When she thinks about how easily it could have been prevented, given that people had warned Google about the dangerous route it was suggesting, "it just kills me," she said. Mrs. Paxson said she searched her husband's phone after the accident and found that he had looked up directions home from the party on Google Maps.

A Google spokesman, José Castañeda, said in a statement that the company, which is owned by Alphabet, had the deepest sympathies for the Paxson family. "Our goal is to provide accurate routing information in Maps, and we are reviewing this lawsuit," he said.

Google Maps has for years directed drivers to cross the bridge, which collapsed in 2013, according to the lawsuit. In November 2020, Google Maps acknowledged receipt of a complaint that a Hickory resident had submitted about the dangerous route recommendation, but it continued to suggest the route, according to the lawsuit.

A father of two drowned when his car plunged into a creek.

"This was a crater literally in the middle of a residential neighborhood," said Robert Zimmerman, a lawyer for Mrs. Paxson. "It'd be one thing if it was there for a day or a week, but it was there for nine years."

Nearly a year after Mr. Paxson's death, Mr. Zimmerman said, the bridge has not been repaired and Google Maps is still directing drivers to cross it.

Google and the other defendants — Hinckley Gauvain L.L.C., Tarde L.L.C. and James Tarlton, who, according to state records, owns Tarde — will be served with the lawsuit paperwork in the coming weeks, Mr. Zimmerman said. The companies and Mr. Tarlton could not immediately be reached, and it was not clear if they had legal representation.

Mr. Zimmerman said there was no valid reason for the companies and Mr. Tarlton, who were responsible for maintaining the bridge, to have left it in such a dangerous state for so long, with no barricades, warning signs or lighting around it.

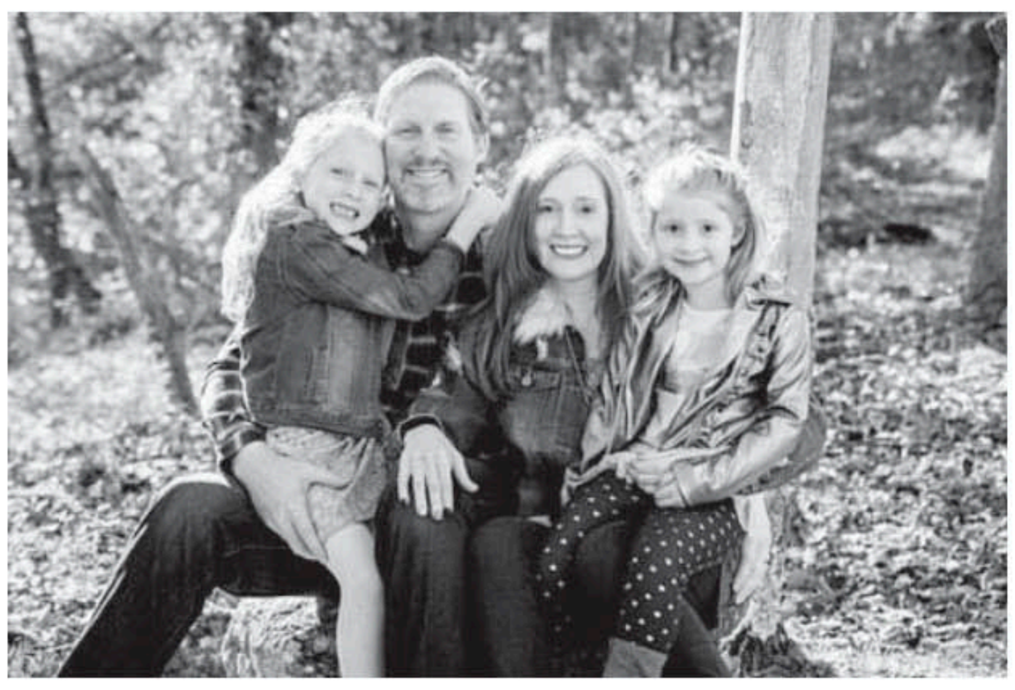
The North Carolina Department of Transportation did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The lawsuit said that Google Maps and other mapping and navigation platforms had the responsibility to update their maps in a timely manner and to correct routes once they were notified of hazards.

The lawsuit raises a question for GPS developers: Who is liable when injuries or fatalities occur because of faulty directions?

The question has become particularly relevant for Google Maps, the most popular mapping service in the United States. In 2018, 72 percent of smartphone users looked up directions on Google Maps, according to Statista, a market insight company. The next most popular app was Waze, which is owned by Google, which was used by 12 percent of smartphone owners that year.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY SALTZ MONGELUZZI BENDESKY



Philip Paxson died after driving off a collapsed bridge in Hickory, N.C., last year. Left, Mr. Paxson with his wife, Alicia, and their daughters in an undated family photo.

GPS services have come under criticism not just for directing drivers through hazardous routes, but also for disorienting hikers. Mountaineering Scotland, a climbing organization, and the John Muir Trust, a charity that maintains natural areas in Britain, have warned that Google Maps may direct hikers to trails that would lead them over cliffs and through rocky, steep terrain.

Chief Executive of a Tech David Testifies About Obstacles to Competing With a Goliath, Google

By CECILIA KANG

WASHINGTON — The chief executive of DuckDuckGo on Thursday described Google as a monopoly that has hurt competition and consumers through its scale and command over the tech industry, in the first testimony of a rival in the federal trial of the Justice Department's antitrust lawsuit against the search giant.

DuckDuckGo's leader, Gabriel Weinberg, said that Google's deals to make its search engine the default on browsers and other platforms blocked its ability to compete effectively. DuckDuckGo, with only 2.5 percent of the U.S. market for search, tried to negotiate with other companies to make its privacy-focused search engine a default. But it was continually turned down because of Google's deals with those tech partners, he said.

"We ultimately decided after three years of trying this that it was a quixotic exercise because of the contracts," Mr. Weinberg said.

The trial of the Justice Department's antitrust complaint against Google is the government's first monopoly case in two decades, and it is expected to sweep in many of the biggest tech companies. Executives at Apple, Microsoft and Verizon are also expected to testify in the trial, which could reshape how consumers get information online.

The Justice Department has argued that Google has violated competition laws by maintaining its monopoly through the deals that make it the default access point in users' search for online information across multiple platforms.

Google has defended its business partnerships, saying the companies, including Apple and Samsung, have chosen to make Google the default on their devices because of Google's superior quality. Google said consumers can easily adjust settings on their browsers to change search engine defaults to alternatives like DuckDuckGo.

Mr. Weinberg said on Thursday that any switches to default search engines take far more steps than Google says.

"It's all just way harder than it needs to be," he said.

Mr. Weinberg didn't disclose details of business negotiations in public proceedings but continued his testimony in a closed session on Day 9 of the antitrust trial.

Judge Amit P. Mehta of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia has closed many hours of testimonies at the request of Google and other companies that have argued to keep documents and testimony of sensitive business matters private.

ACQUISITIONS | INTERNATIONAL | GAMING

Applications For Refunds For Fortnite

By DERRICK BRYSON TAYLOR

The U.S. Federal Trade Commission has begun notifying more than 37 million people who can now apply to claim a portion of a $245 million settlement with the owner of Fortnite, Epic Games, the agency announced this week.

Fortnite, the multiplayer shooter game that allows as many as 100 people to meet on a virtual island and battle it out to be No. 1, has become a cultural phenomenon since it was released about six years ago. It is no secret that the game can bring joy and pain: Top players sometimes score financial wins in tournaments, while obsessions can lead to stress at home.

In December, Epic Games agreed to pay $275 million to settle accusations that it violated the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, and the company also agreed to refund $245 million to customers over accusations that it used manipulative online practices, called "dark patterns," to trick millions players of all ages into making unwanted purchases.

"The company also made it easy for children to rack up charges without parental consent and locked the accounts of consumers who disputed unauthorized charges with their credit card companies," the F.T.C. said in a news release.

The deal, totaling $520 million, not only put the video game industry on notice, but also was seen as a signal that federal officials may be taking a more assertive stance toward regulating the tech industry.

Those seeking to claim a piece of the settlement are advised to pay close attention to the guidelines established by the F.T.C. Here's what to know:

First, check your email.

The F.T.C. said it had begun sending out emails to millions of Fortnite gamers this week about possibly reclaiming a refund. The agency said it would continue reaching out for one month.

Where can I apply?

The F.T.C. has established a page dedicated to Fortnite refunds.

When is the deadline to submit a claim?

The process to claim compensation will take one month to complete, the F.T.C. said, and customers have until Jan. 17, 2024, to submit a claim.

Are there age restrictions?

Yes. Claimants must be at least 18, and anyone younger must have a parent or guardian complete a form on their behalf.

Not everyone who plays the game will qualify.

Gamers may apply for a refund if they were charged in-game currency for unwanted items between January 2017 and September 2022.

Parents may apply if their child made charges to their credit card without their knowledge between January 2017 and November 2018.

Others can file a claim if their accounts were locked between January 2017 and September 2022 after complaining to their credit card company about the wrongful charges.

How much will my refund be?

It's unclear at this time. Payment amounts will depend on several factors, the F.T.C. said, including how many people request one. It's also unclear when payments will be issued to gamers and parents.

Hong Kong Reaches Out to Reassure Wary Investors

FROM FIRST BUSINESS PAGE

spot.

Hong Kong, a former British colony, has owed much of its success as a global financial capital to its semiautonomous status under "one country, two systems," promised during the British handover of Hong Kong to China in 1997. The political accommodation ensured that Hong Kong could exercise a high degree of autonomy over its governance and laws, allowing it to protect rights and freedoms not granted elsewhere in China.

A national security law enforced in 2020 by Beijing in Hong Kong after widespread protests has undermined this autonomy. Under the broad and vaguely worded legislation, any politician who is not a patriot to Beijing has been purged or punished by the government. Officials have pledged loyalty to "the motherland"; free speech has been rolled back and dissent crushed.

Speaking to concerns that Hong Kong was losing its identity, Mr. Chan told politicians and business leaders in Paris: "Hong Kong's singular 'one country, two systems' is alive and well."

LOUISE DELMOTTE/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Amid fear that Hong Kong is losing its unique identity, its stocks have been among the worst performing in the world.

But Hong Kong's political changes have escalated tensions and hardened geopolitical lines between China and the West, affecting how Western businesses operate in Hong Kong, including some that have pulled up and left.

"It is pretty clear that Paul Chan and his ilk are trying to toe the line," said Andrew Collier, managing director of the Hong Kong-based research firm Orient Capital. "If you viewed Hong Kong as a safe harbor from the politics of the mainland, then that view has changed."

As the many foreign businesses that remained in Hong Kong have tried to adjust to the new political environment, they have been given reasons for fresh concerns.

In July, the city's chief executive, John Lee, offered financial rewards for any information leading to the arrest of eight pro-democracy activists who fled Hong Kong's national security law to places like the United States and Britain. In his appeal, he said they should be treated like "rats in the street," and added that the police would "vigorously pursue" anyone who posed a threat to national security in the city. This week, Beijing ordered consulates in Hong Kong to turn over personal information about all local staff, including addresses and passport and identification numbers, bringing the city closer in line with rules elsewhere in China.

Against the backdrop of shifting regulations, law firms in Hong Kong are struggling to counter a perception among clients that the legal landscape has deteriorated, said Lester Ross, a corporate lawyer in the Beijing office of WilmerHale who works with lawyers in Hong Kong.

"There has been a loss of confidence in Hong Kong's legal system," Mr. Ross said. "Real or imagined, that sentiment is very real."

The erosion of rights has also inhibited the ability of investors, financial analysts and academics to speak freely. Companies are choosing other jurisdictions, like London and Singapore, for international arbitration out of concern that Hong Kong is no longer neutral. Many clients have also raised concerns with their lawyers about the privacy of their communications in Hong Kong.

"I understand these concerns," said Lau Siu-Kai, a senior adviser to the Chinese government on Hong Kong policy. "But you have to bear in mind that this national security law is still a new law, and both China and Hong Kong are learning how to implement this law effectively."

At a luncheon last week, Mr. Chan addressed worries about whether foreign business could still trust Hong Kong law. He assured a group of foreign businesspeople and diplomats that the city's common law system, a cornerstone of confidence among investors and businesses, was intact and that Xi Jinping, China's top leader, had promised to respect Hong Kong's system of governance.

Beijing's promises, however, are not helping to alleviate worries about the city's independence.

The concerns have been simmering for several years. But they are being brought front and center as China's economic downturn, its worst in decades, spills over into Hong Kong. Like the rest of China, Hong Kong is struggling to rev up its economy after closely following Beijing's "zero-Covid" pandemic policy, which left it cut off from the world for much of the past three years.

This spring, the city finally swung out of its third recession in four years. But in recent months, growth has slowed, and economists are revising their expectations again.

Chinese tourists, who once made up the bulk of visitors to the city and far outspent other visitors, are returning, but they aren't spending the way they used to. Officials gave away half a million tickets for flights to the city through a "Hello Hong Kong" campaign, but tourists from abroad have been slow to come back. Hong Kong's international airport, the busiest in Asia before the pandemic, has ceded that title to regional competitors in Seoul and Bangkok.

Hong Kong's stock market is being pummeled by investors who are skittish about the Chinese economy. So far this year, Hong Kong's stock market has fallen more than 11 percent, making it the fourth-worst performing market in the world. This gloom has dented the appetite of Hong Kongers to spend.

Some Western investors are staying away right now, amid broader geopolitical tensions that have prompted American officials to ban investment in certain Chinese companies.

> *'There has been a loss of confidence in Hong Kong's legal system.'*
>
> Lester Ross, a corporate lawyer in the Beijing office of WilmerHale.

"If the U.S. -China relationship was not that bad, the stock market would perform better," said Simon Lee Siu-po, a senior lecturer at Chinese University of Hong Kong. "If the economy of China was better, the stock market would perform better, too," he said.

The prospects also don't look great for companies listing their shares publicly in Hong Kong. Companies this year have raised just $2.7 billion, the lowest amount in two decades, according to the most recent data. More stringent rules for Chinese companies looking to list outside mainland China, as well as Mr. Xi's tightening grip on private businesses in China, have dampened optimism.

The list of conglomerates going bust in China is growing, prompting more questions about corporate governance standards in Hong Kong, where most of them are publicly listed.

HNA Group, a Chinese conglomerate that was once China's biggest dealmaker, went bankrupt in 2021 and then disclosed that nearly $10 billion of its money had been embezzled. Last year, auditors for more than a dozen Chinese property companies listed in Hong Kong resigned, according to Reuters, drawing attention to the industry and corporate governance issues.

The financial uncertainty and political changes are making Hong Kong seem, to some investors, like any other Chinese city.

But the Chinese government believes that it can seize greater political control of Hong Kong while keeping it distinct as a financial hub.

"China wants Hong Kong to use 'one country, two systems' to play a role no other Chinese city can play," said Mr. Lau, the senior adviser to Beijing. "If you compare Hong Kong to other Chinese cities, why are so many companies still trying to raise capital in Hong Kong? They see Hong Kong as a different place to Shanghai or Beijing."

In Split Decision, Bank of England Hits Pause on Rising Rates

By ESHE NELSON

LONDON — The Bank of England left interest rates unchanged on Thursday, the first time in nearly two years that it opted to not raise rates during a long-running battle against stubbornly high inflation.

A day earlier, data showed inflation in Britain had unexpectedly slowed. Policymakers at the central bank kept interest rates at 5.25 percent, the highest since early 2008, pausing after 14 consecutive rate increases. But it was a close-run decision; just five of the bank's nine rate-setters voted to hold rates.

"Inflation has fallen a lot in recent months, and we think it will continue to do so," Andrew Bailey, the governor of the central bank, said in a statement. "But there is no room for complacency." He was among the narrow majority in favor of holding rates steady.

Interest rates need to remain "sufficiently restrictive for sufficiently long" enough to return inflation to the central bank's 2 percent target, according to the minutes of this week's policy meeting. Officials also left the door open for further rate increases, "if there were evidence of more persistent inflationary pressures," the minutes said.

The Bank of England's pause comes during a long and tumultuous struggle against inflation. The central bank began its cycle of rate increases in December 2021, raising rates from near zero to heights last seen during the financial crisis of 2008. In that time, inflation has soared faster than economists expected and has remained high, even though it is down from its peak of about 11 percent in October.

Policymakers have come under significant public pressure for not maintaining a stronger hold over inflation and not foreseeing the problem in their forecasts. The central bank has said Ben Bernanke, the former U.S. Federal Reserve chair, will lead a review into the bank's forecasting processes.

This week, some news landed in the central bank's favor. Consumer prices rose 6.7 percent in August from a year earlier, down slightly from the previous month. Economists had expected the rate to increase because of a global rise in energy prices. Instead, slower food price inflation and other factors pulled the overall rate of inflation down.

Better still for the central bank, measures of domestic inflationary pressures also slowed. The annual rate of core inflation, which strips out energy and food costs that tend to be more volatile and influenced by international markets, fell to 6.2 percent in August, from 6.9 percent the previous month. And services inflation, which is heavily influenced by companies' wage costs, slowed by more than the central bank's forecast.

> *Left unchanged for the first time in nearly two years.*

As inflation rates drop across much of the world and economies are weakening, in part because of the aggressive policy tightening by central banks, officials are trying to carefully calibrate the right level of interest rates. Several central banks are shifting their focus from how high to raise interest rates to how long they will need to stay elevated.

On Wednesday, the Federal Reserve left interest rates unchanged, but officials suggested that they expected to make another rate increase before the end of 2023. Last week, policymakers at the European Central Bank said they were likely done raising interest rates, based on their assessment of the economy, and would keep rates at high levels "for a sufficiently long duration."

Before the Bank of England's decision was announced, there was an almost-even chance that the central bank would raise or hold rates, according to trading on financial markets. In the end, it was a split decision among the nine members of the central bank's rate setting committee. The five policymakers who voted to hold rates steady, including Mr. Bailey, cited lower-than-expected inflation rates and signs that the labor market was loosening, with unemployment rising in recent months and fewer job vacancies.

The other four, including the committee's newest member, Megan Greene, voted to raise rates by a quarter point, arguing that the resilience of the economy, high wage growth and other indicators showed there was evidence of more persistent inflationary pressures.

One of the challenges the Bank of England is facing is the surprising strength of the economy, which has avoided recession as consumers have continued to spend despite rising prices and high interest rates. Recently, Britain's statistics office said the economy had recovered much more strongly after pandemic lockdowns than it initially estimated.

But as the effects of high interest rates are felt across more of the economy, the outlook is bleaker. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development said this week that it expected the British economy to grow 0.3 percent this year, among the slowest of advanced economies, and 0.8 percent next year.

So far, the impact of high interest rates has been felt mostly in the housing sector, where homeowners face jumps in their mortgage payments and housing investment has dropped.

The Bank of England also announced on Thursday that it would continue to sell off its stock of government bonds, acquired since the financial crisis. Over the next year, the bank plans to reduce its bond holdings by 100 billion pounds, or about $123 billion, to £658 billion.

Cisco Will Buy Splunk, a Software Company That Analyzes Data, for $28 Billion in Cash

By MICHAEL J. de la MERCED

Cisco agreed on Thursday to buy Splunk, a data-analysis software company, for $28 billion in cash, as technology giants continue to look to acquisitions as a way to grow — particularly in hot sectors like artificial intelligence.

The deal is the largest ever announced by Cisco, a longtime buyer of smaller tech companies, and suggests the company is willing to test antitrust officials' growing opposition to big-ticket mergers and acquisitions.

Founded in 2003, Splunk — whose name refers to spelunking, or cave exploration — focuses on mining its customers' data for insights, particularly on security vulnerabilities and other trends in their business.

> *Testing the opposition to big-ticket mergers by antitrust officials.*

This summer, Splunk announced a flurry of A.I.-infused services meant to help companies detect and respond to potential issues more quickly.

Cisco said it planned to combine Splunk's capabilities with its own security offerings, including the monitoring of customers' network data, web traffic and emails.

"I consistently heard from our customers the strategic importance of what Splunk does," Chuck Robbins, the Cisco chief executive, said in an interview. Combining Splunk's systems with the information collected from Cisco's, he said, presented an "opportunity to bring a level of insight that's unmatched."

Gary Steele, the Splunk chief executive, added that Cisco's bigger sales footprint would help his company sell its products more widely, especially internationally. Mr. Steele is set to stay on as a member of Cisco's leadership team when the transaction closes, which is expected by the fall of next year.

The deal moves Cisco further away from its roots in network hardware and into higher-margin, more predictable software subscriptions.

Much of Cisco's push into software is being driven by acquisitions: The company has announced eight takeovers this year, according to S&P Capital IQ.

PAU BARRENA/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

The Cisco stand at the Mobile World Congress in February. The company, which is looking to increase its presence in A.I., has long been a buyer of smaller tech businesses.

By some measures, Cisco is paying a high price. The transaction valued Splunk at $157 a share, a 31 percent premium to where its stock closed on Wednesday and 25 percent above the company's 52-week high. (Cisco had held discussions to buy Splunk early last year.)

Shares in Cisco fell 4 percent after the deal was announced. Shares in Splunk rose on the news, but still traded below the acquisition offer price, suggesting investors were somewhat skeptical that the deal would be completed. Among the potential concerns is whether antitrust regulators will approve the transaction, given increased scrutiny of big mergers by the Biden administration.

Privately, corporate executives have said recent setbacks for regulators, including defeats for the Federal Trade Commission's effort to block Microsoft's $70 billion takeover of Activision Blizzard, could make it easier to do deals.

Mr. Robbins expressed confidence in the Cisco-Splunk deal's clearing antitrust hurdles, because there is little overlap in the companies' products.

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Sports
The New York Times

BASEBALL

ON BASEBALL

The Cubs Careen Toward the Finish. Hold Tight, Fans. Enjoy the Ride.

MICHAEL REAVES/GETTY IMAGES

By JON GREENBERG
The Athletic

CHICAGO — This is, basically, what the Chicago Cubs wanted, right?

Sure, they would rather have more certainty about their playoff fate and not have important relievers on the injured list, but it's getting late in the final month of baseball's regular season and the Cubs are in the thick of a playoff race. They're relevant. Answering questions about a September swoon is still better than packing up your locker and scouring the fantasy football waiver wire.

September relevancy was the team's goal coming into the year. A modest one, sure, but realistic. That's why the Cubs became buyers instead of sellers in July. For moments like Tuesday when the Cubs clobbered the visiting Pirates, 14-1, to end a five-game skid and keep pace in the wild-card standings.

"I think the way that we handled the trade deadline was an opportunity, right?" Cubs second baseman Nico Hoerner said before Tuesday's game. "We had the chance to play baseball that really mattered and turn our season around in a way to put us in the place where we are right now."

It wasn't that long ago that we assumed the Cubs would be trade-deadline purveyors, restocking the farm system with an eye toward 2024 and beyond.

It's too early to determine whether this season should be judged as a success or simply a modest disappointment. But failure has been tossed out as an option.

Context is important. This wasn't a World Series-or-bust season. The Cubs went into the year hoping for the best, and they've come pretty close to achieving it, relatively speaking.

CHARLES REX ARBOGAST/ASSOCIATED PRESS

MICHAEL REAVES/GETTY IMAGES

In the Cubs' 14-1 win on Tuesday, clockwise from above, Pittsburgh's Jack Suwinski couldn't catch a Dansby Swanson homer, Nico Hoerner scored two runs and Alexander Canario hit a grand slam.

Nine to Go

The Cubs are scheduled to play their last six games on the road, where they are one game under .500 (37-38).

HOME (3)

Friday-Sunday vs. Colorado

AWAY (6)

Sept. 26-28 at Atlanta
Sept. 29-Oct. 1 at Milwaukee

THE NEW YORK TIMES

You can be angry about what the Cubs are not in the wake of the World Series window, but you can't say this season has not been enjoyable to experience.

Still, that doesn't mean you call the season a success if they flop down the stretch. But it's too early for all of that talk.

One thing you can say now is Jed Hoyer, the Cubs' president for baseball operations, definitely made the right choice to go for it and not trade Marcus Stroman or Cody Bellinger, or both. This is a playoff-caliber team. Whether they actually make the postseason is up to the players.

And Tuesday's performance was a good start to the last dozen games of the season.

Dansby Swanson and Seiya Suzuki homered early to help the Cubs build a cushion, and the team tacked on eight runs in the eighth inning, highlighted by the rookie Alexander Canario's first big-league home run, which just happened to be a grand slam. Cubs starter Javier Assad struck out eight and gave up just a solo homer in five innings. No one had to nitpick Manager David Ross's decisions. It was a welcome break for Cubs fans.

When a team flops in September, there's always a question of whether it hit the metaphorical wall. The season is a marathon but September is a sprint, as Ross has reminded people.

"I always say a lot of times when you don't hit, you looked tired," Hoyer said, adding that the team had struggled to hit during its recent road stretch. "I don't think the quality of our at-bats was nearly as good as when we were playing well. A lot of times people during those periods, people want to say the team looks flat, because when you have bases loaded, no one out twice and you get double-play balls, you look flat or tired. When guys are circling the bases, you look like you have a lot of energy."

> Even if this team flops in the playoff race, the year has been a blast.

So the Cubs didn't look tired or flat as they headed into the final stretch. It helped to be facing the Pirates, who have lost 10 of 12 games to the Cubs this season but beat them, 13-7, on Wednesday.

"They just need something to turn it, really," Ross said of his hitters before the game. "It feels like we haven't gotten that big double in the gap or three-run homer."

In times like this, a pennant race where things could go in two radically different directions, we talk to veteran players about how they can lead younger ones and we talk to managers about how they navigate a tense situation. But in reality, most of this is just fluff.

Can the players get the hits and outs they need to win a baseball game? Can a manager manage not to screw things up? Health is paramount, of course, but after availability, ability is, you know, kind of important.

So is luck. Hoyer watched the Cubs lose a 13-inning game in Arizona over the weekend while he was on a scouting trip in Japan and tried to remind himself of the games the Cubs had won this year by inches and milliseconds to make him feel better.

"We've gotten some breaks along the way," Hoyer said. "And hopefully we get some more."

They could use some good news in terms of health.

Right now, the Cubs' top two relievers, Adbert Alzolay and Michael Fulmer, are on the injured list, along with infielder Jeimer Candelario, their major acquisition at the trade deadline. All three could return, but the games they're missing now are important.

Stroman finally returned after a stint on the injured list, but if he's going to make an impact, it's probably as a reliever, an unfamiliar position for him. Nick Madrigal just went on the I.L. with a hamstring strain, and the way Ross has talked, it doesn't sound as if we'll see him again this season.

The Cubs aren't fading, but I'm not sure they're getting stronger, either. I don't think this is a team of destiny, nor do I think it's the reincarnation of the 2004 team. It's a group that deserves to taste October, even if it's a small glass.

If this were last year, the main story line of the night would have been Canario driving in five runs with a double and a grand slam in his first start and Pete Crow-Armstrong making his Wrigley Field debut. But this isn't the time to lavish attention on prospects — well, unless they hit a grand slam in their first big-league start. Then it's OK, I suppose.

The loss on Wednesday dropped the Cubs' record to 79-73, but they kept their loose grasp on the third wild card entering Thursday's action. Now they just have to win Friday, Saturday, Sunday — you get the picture.

This is how it's going to go for the next two weeks.

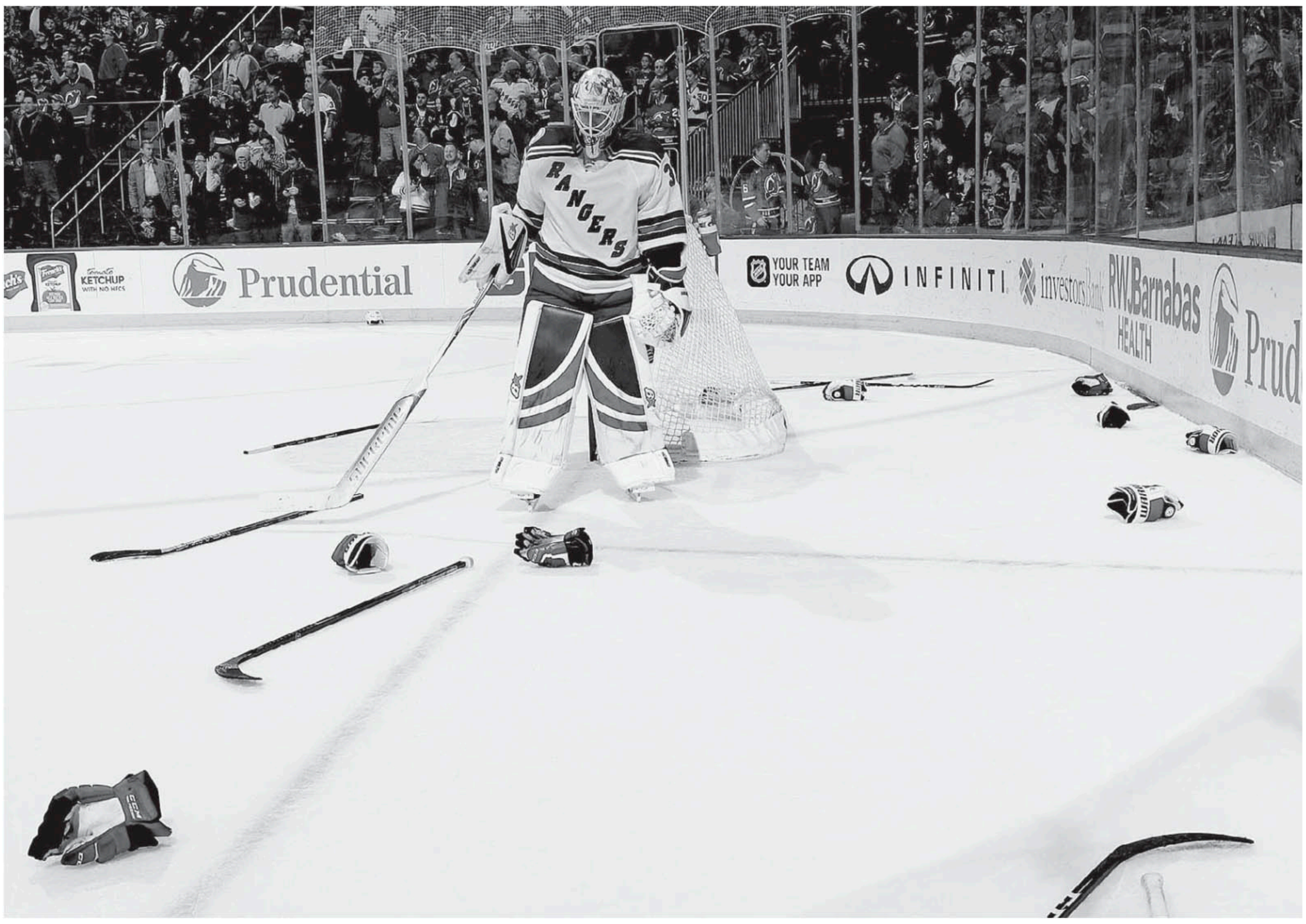
It's been a fun season, an encouraging one. Now, the Cubs just have to finish it off. That's the hard part. It's the fun part, too.

Jon Greenberg is a columnist for The Athletic.

HOCKEY

As More Leagues Ban Fighting, Some Players Push Back

By MARK LAZERUS
The Athletic



BRUCE BENNETT/GETTY IMAGES

Antti Raanta of the Rangers after a brawl between his team and the Devils in 2017. Fighting persists in the N.H.L., largely because the punishment is so light.

Tyler Boucher would love to tell you how his first fight was some noble enterprise, that he was defending a fallen teammate and dispatching a hated nemesis, about how his willingness to put his own safety on the line awakened a crowd and inspired his team to a crucial victory.

It wasn't. And it didn't.

"We were getting pumped by the Hamilton Bulldogs, and I just had enough," he said.

It came late in Boucher's first season with the Ottawa 67s of the Ontario Hockey League. Hamilton was up, 6-0, early in the third period, there was a goal-mouth scrum, and Boucher peeled Giordano Biondi off the pile and started pounding him into the ice — nine overhand rights wrapped around one uppercut. It was a thorough thrashing. It accomplished nothing, of course, but it was cathartic all the same. And hey, he was trying to impress his father.

Brian Boucher, the former N.H.L. goaltender, doesn't get to nearly as many of his son's games as he'd like, but every now and then, a gap in his television duties lines up with one of Tyler's games, and he can sneak away to Ottawa for a night or two. That game in April 2022 was one of those games, and earlier in the day, Brian had teased Tyler about when he was going to finally drop his gloves for the first time after a year at Boston University (fighting is banned in the N.C.A.A.).

"I made sure I was fighting that night," Tyler Boucher said with a smile. "That's hockey, man. That's why it's such a special sport. It's so fun to watch. I enjoy that part of the game. I know some people don't, but it's a big part of the game."

It has been since the game's inception in the 1800s.

But for how much longer?

It's no shocking development that fighting in hockey has been on the decline for years. N.H.L. teams have shifted the focus from toughness to talent, from strength to speed, and few teams, if any, are willing to waste a roster spot on a guy whose only skill is face-punching. And with all we know —

A crackdown seems unlikely to trickle up to the N.H.L.

and all we have yet to learn — about brain injuries, it's awfully hard to justify having players worth millions of dollars risk their careers in bare-knuckle brawls. Yet fighting persists, largely because the punishment — a five-minute major, possibly a two-minute instigator minor and a 10-minute misconduct — is so light.

But two of the three biggest junior leagues are doing their best to change that. In 2012, the Ontario Hockey League started handing out two-game suspensions when a player reached 10 fights in one season. In 2016, the threshold was dropped to three fights. The O.H.L. also created an "aggressor" penalty, which calls for a player's ejection if he continues to beat on a defenseless or unwilling opponent. Two fighting majors in one game also earn a game misconduct. The new rules immediately cut fighting in roughly half.

Now the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League is taking things even further. Starting this season, which begins Friday, fighting is essentially banned. Any fight will result in an automatic ejection, and any instigators will get an automatic one-game suspension. Aggressors get a two-game ban.

The Western Hockey League, the third of the three junior leagues that constitute the Canadian Hockey League remains the wild west, a last bastion of unfettered fighting in the C.H.L.

With fighting now banned in youth hockey, college hockey and a third of the C.H.L., the practice's eventual demise feels more inevitable than ever. New-school fans might like that. Neurologists and athletic trainers have to like it. But you can guess who doesn't like it: some of the people the rules are meant to protect — the players.

"Fighting's part of the game," said a Buffalo Sabres prospect, Matthew Savoie, who played three years for Winnipeg in the Western Hockey League. "You need it to be able to police guys out there a little bit. It happens quite a bit in the Western League and guys love it, honestly. Fans love it. Keep it in."

Most players will tell you the same thing. If you take fighting out of the game, it's only going to make things worse. Goons and cheap-shot artists will run around with impunity, free to take runs at the other team's best players without ever having to "answer the bell." And without fighting to formally quash a beef — it's part of the unofficial hockey player code — bad blood will linger longer, and players will resort to dirty plays and injurious tactics to retaliate for hits they didn't like, legal or otherwise.

"If there's no fighting, there's going to be more cheap shots," said Xavier Bourgault, an Edmonton Oilers prospect who played four seasons in the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League, which is often called the Q. "Some guys that don't like to fight, or don't want to defend themselves, they're going to try to be dirty, try to hit late."

The St. Louis Blues prospect Zach Dean, another four-year veteran of the Q, said: "There's always going to have to be fighting. If there's no fighting, the stars of the game are going to get taken advantage of, and guys are going to be able to do stuff and get away with it."

Will they, though? Is fighting truly a deterrent? The game has forever been full of big hits, dirty hits, high hits and cheap hits, despite the ever-looming threat of a fight. And is the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League this season truly going to devolve into Thunderdome on ice, with players targeting knees and Achilles' tendons just because they won't be forced to drop the gloves and answer for their actions.

After all, the N.C.A.A. — with its automatic ejection for fighting and full-cage helmets — isn't some chaotic free-for-all.

"No, nothing like that in college," said Montreal Canadiens winger Sean Farrell, who played the past two seasons at Harvard. "I haven't really seen anything crazy. It's fine without fighting in college, so I'm sure the other leagues will be fine, too."

The N.H.L. has shown zero appetite to ban fighting, content to allow it to fade on its own, and fights are common in the American Hockey League, as well. Unless fighting is banned at every level short of the N.H.L., it's unlikely to trickle up to the world's top league. And as long as that's the case, prospects turning pro from college and the Q might be dangerously unprepared for what awaits them.

"I don't think it's a good idea at all," said the Blackhawks prospect Samuel Savoie, a scrappy winger who has played the last three seasons in the Q. "Guys are going to come into the A.H.L. or N.H.L., and the other guys are going to be able to fight. They'll have more experience, they'll know you don't know how to fight, so they'll have an advantage on you. It's not the best of ideas."

Anders Sorensen, who coaches the Blackhawks' A.H.L. affiliate in Rockford, Ill., brushed off that concern.

"With what we know about concussions that we maybe had not known 10, 15, even eight years ago, I think it's a good step," he said. "Honestly, it seems like it's becoming less and less."

That said, there were 781 fighting majors handed out in the A.H.L. last season, according to HockeyFights, a website that tracks them. That's quite a lot, even if it is drastically down from 10 years earlier, when there were 1,924 fighting majors across the league. It might be a dying art, but it's a long way from dead.

It's also clear that rules designed to curtail fighting work. In 1987, the N.H.L. instituted a rule against leaving the bench to join a fight, and the penalties were severe. The first player to hop the boards earned a 10-game suspension, and his coach got five games. Bench-clearing brawls, once a staple of N.H.L. games, disappeared almost instantly.

The O.H.L. had a precipitous decline in fights once it started suspending players after three fights instead of 10, starting in 2016-17. In the 2015-16 season, there were 632 fighting majors in the O.H.L. In 2016-17, there were just 335.

The Quebec league was a logical place to start with a full ban because fighting was fading faster there than in the other two leagues. In 2013-14, there were 891 fighting majors in the Q. Last season, there were 157. That averages out to one fight every 7.8 games. Hardly an epidemic.

"It's a bit more soft now," Samuel Savoie said. "That's why with the Q, I don't know why they got fighting out of the league. Because last year, there were maybe 10 fights in the whole league. Nobody really fights. Sometimes you have to defend teammates, for sure, but the league is fast and defensive, so there are not many big hits and all that. But guys need to know they can't do that stuff, so if they're banning fighting, they need to give more penalties for hits that are not as cheap, not as big. I don't know what's going to happen. It's going to be a weird year."

The idea that every fight is valiant and chivalrous is, of course, folly. Few fans of any stripe begrudge a player going after a guy who just delivered a vicious elbow to one of his teammates. That heat-of-the-moment stuff is unlikely to ever leave the game fully. But it's the staged fights, the "message-sending" at the end of a blowout, the fights designed to wake up a sleepy crowd — that's what's fading.

But here's the thing: Players love those, too. As do plenty of fans.

"Fighting fires up the boys and the crowd every time," said the Anaheim Ducks prospect Pavel Mintyukov, who has spent the past couple of years in the O.H.L. after being a top-10 pick out of Russia. "Everyone loves fights. It just brings energy into the game."

That's the thing about fighting, though. It's not about what it actually does — very little, typically — it's about what it makes everybody feel. It's emotional, equal parts therapeutic and barbaric. The combatant can feel useful, helpful, a good teammate. A teammate can feel protected, loved, cared for. A fan can feel energized, a demand for vengeance satisfied in the most primal of ways. Silly? Maybe. Primitive? Sure. But to those on the ice, it matters. It means something to throw a punch, to take a punch, in your teammates' honor.

No, the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League isn't likely to become a bloodbath this season because of its ban on fighting. Nor is it going to become Disney on Ice. In fact, it'll probably look a lot like it did last season. Just a little different. A little less dangerous. A little more modern. The only real question is, who's next?

"I don't know what it'll look like," Bourgault said. "Pretty curious to see."

Mark Lazerus is a senior N.H.L. writer for The Athletic.

RON WARD/THE CANADIAN PRESS, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

'There's always going to have to be fighting.'

ZACH DEAN, above right, a St. Louis Blues prospect.

ERIC BOLTE/USA TODAY SPORTS, VIA REUTERS

'You need it to be able to police guys out there a little bit.'

MATTHEW SAVOIE, a prospect for the Buffalo Sabres.

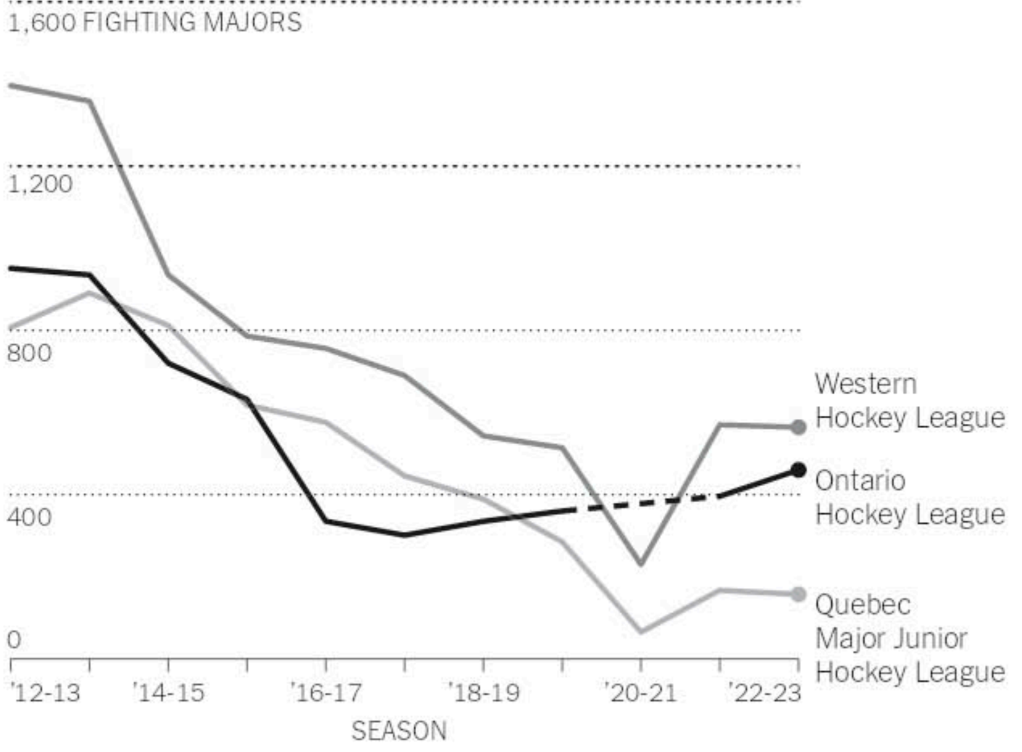
STEW MILNE/ASSOCIATED PRESS

'It's fine without fighting in college.'

SEAN FARRELL, a Montreal Canadiens winger who played at Harvard.

Fewer Fists Are Flying

As two of the three biggest junior hockey leagues have toughened penalties for fighting, the leagues have seen a decline in fights.



Note: The '20-21 O.H.L. season was canceled. Q.M.J.H.L. and W.H.L. played shortened seasons. | Source: Hockey Fights

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06 MAZDA	JM1BK343561437245
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22 KIA	KNDETCA20N7293816
20 HONDA	1HGCV1F38LA153375
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07 HONDA	5FNRL38667B059025
06 JEEP	1J4GL48KX6W223889
13 VW	3VWDP7AJ3DM219077
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19 NISSAN	3N1AB7AP2KY242321
14 CHEVR	1G11B5SL1EF246832
15 NISSAN	5N1AR2MM8FC634274
18 BMW	WBA4J3C59JBG95866
17JAQUAR	SADCJ2BN9HA096509
18 DODGE	2C3CDZGG8JH322945
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18 NISSAN	JN8AT2MV2JW347832
17 JEEP	1C4RJFAG4HC955302
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16 MAZDA	JM1GJ1T56G1454461
22 CHEVR	1GNEVJKWXNJ124221
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15 HONDA	2HKRM4H76FH632162
17 TOYOTA	5TDDZ3DC6HS183636
21 NISSAN	3N1AB6CV1MY329406
15 ACURA	5FRYD4H25FB015557
18HYUNDAI	5XYZU3LB1JG510346
14 JEEP	1C4HJWEG3EL164809
18 JEEP	3C4NJDCB3JT281125
18 BMW	WBXYJ5C32JEF72040
20 GMC	3GKALPEVXLL233629
19 JEEP	ZACNJBC16KPK15153
15 ME/BE	55SWF4KB5FU037973
18 HONDA	1HGCV1F31JA240161
15 DODGE	2C4RDGBG6FR579802
19 HONDA	SHHFK8G72KU200144
20 HONDA	5FNYF6H38LB043915
19 HONDA	1HGCV1F51KA038195

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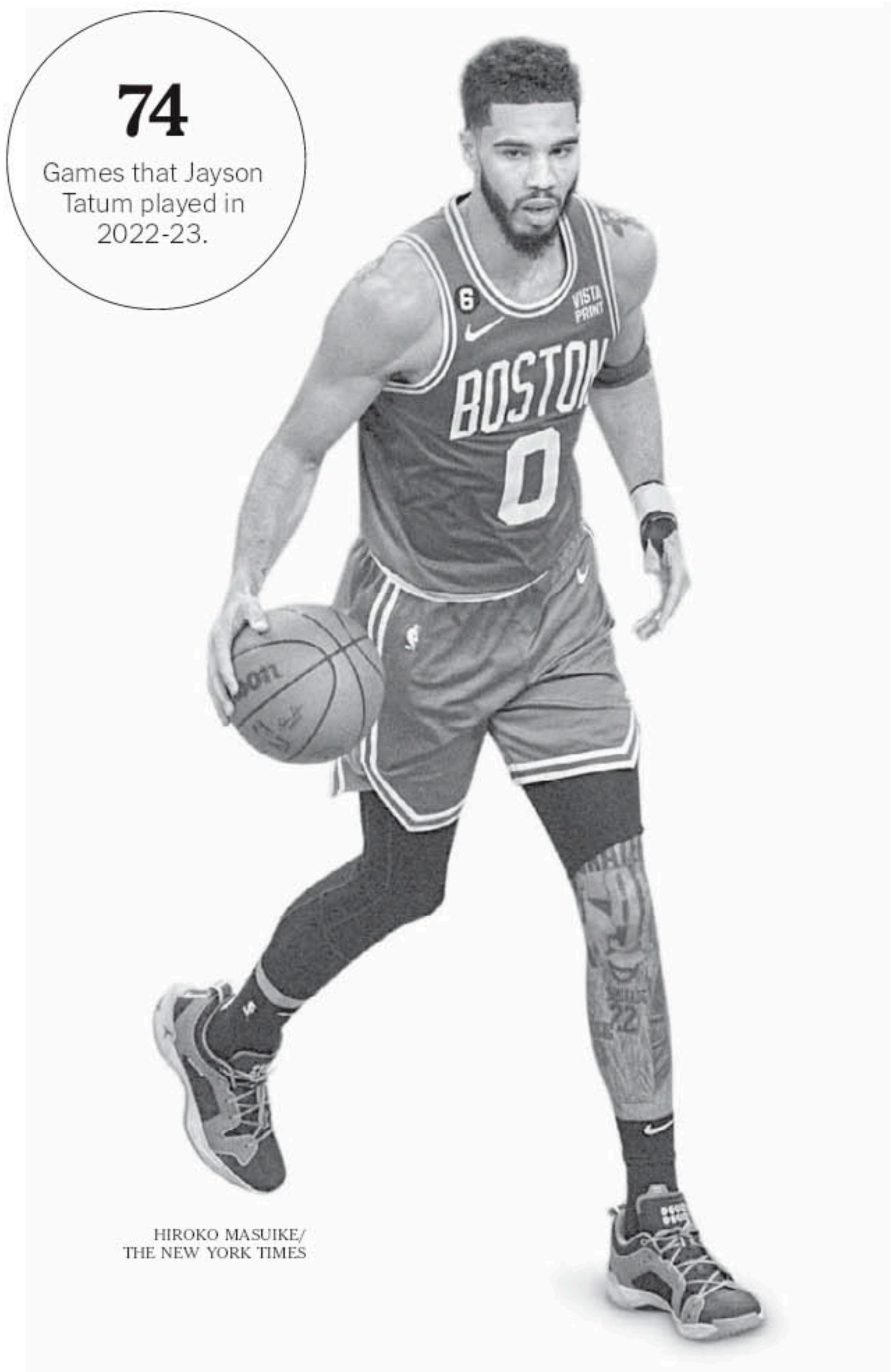

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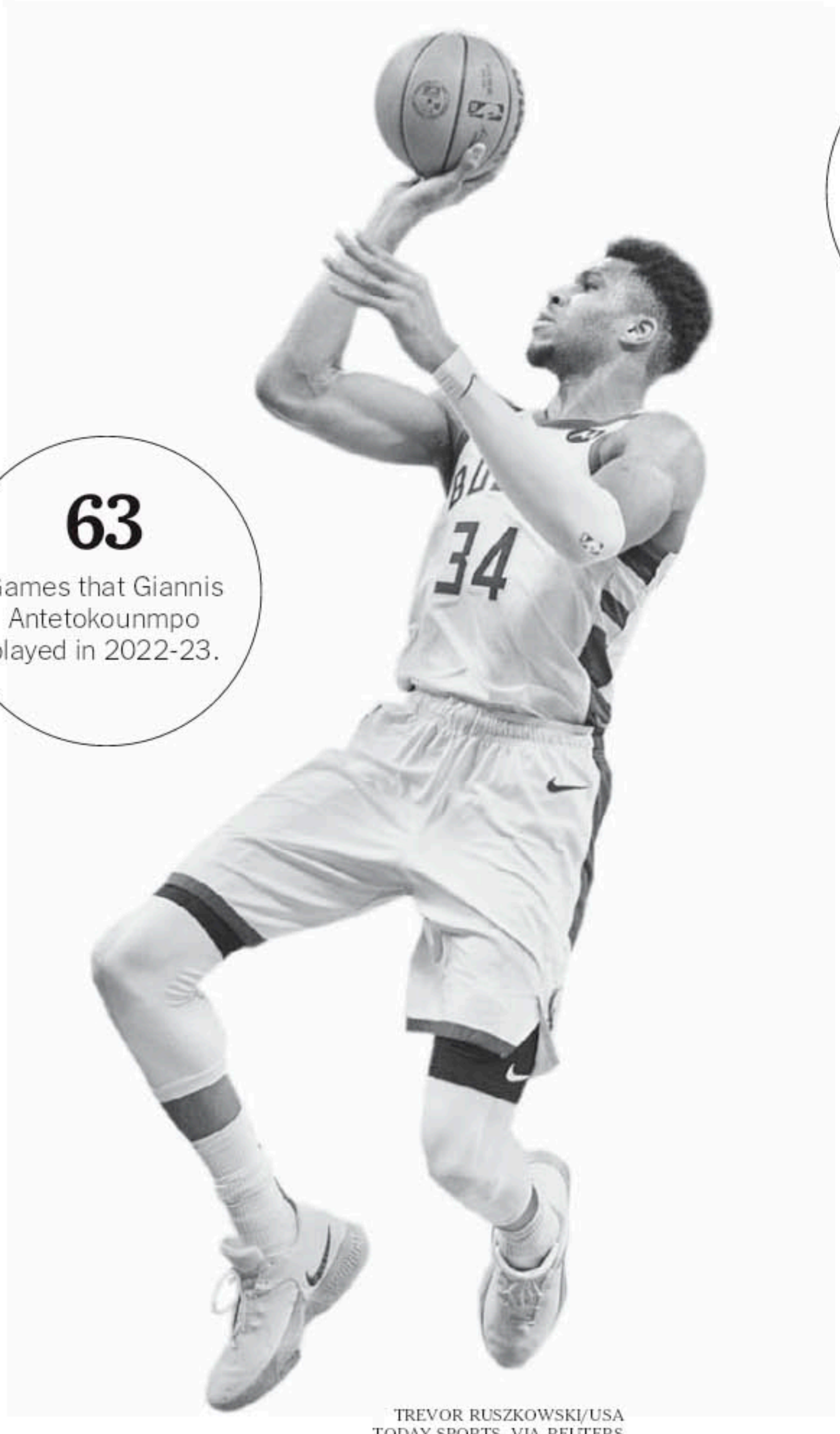
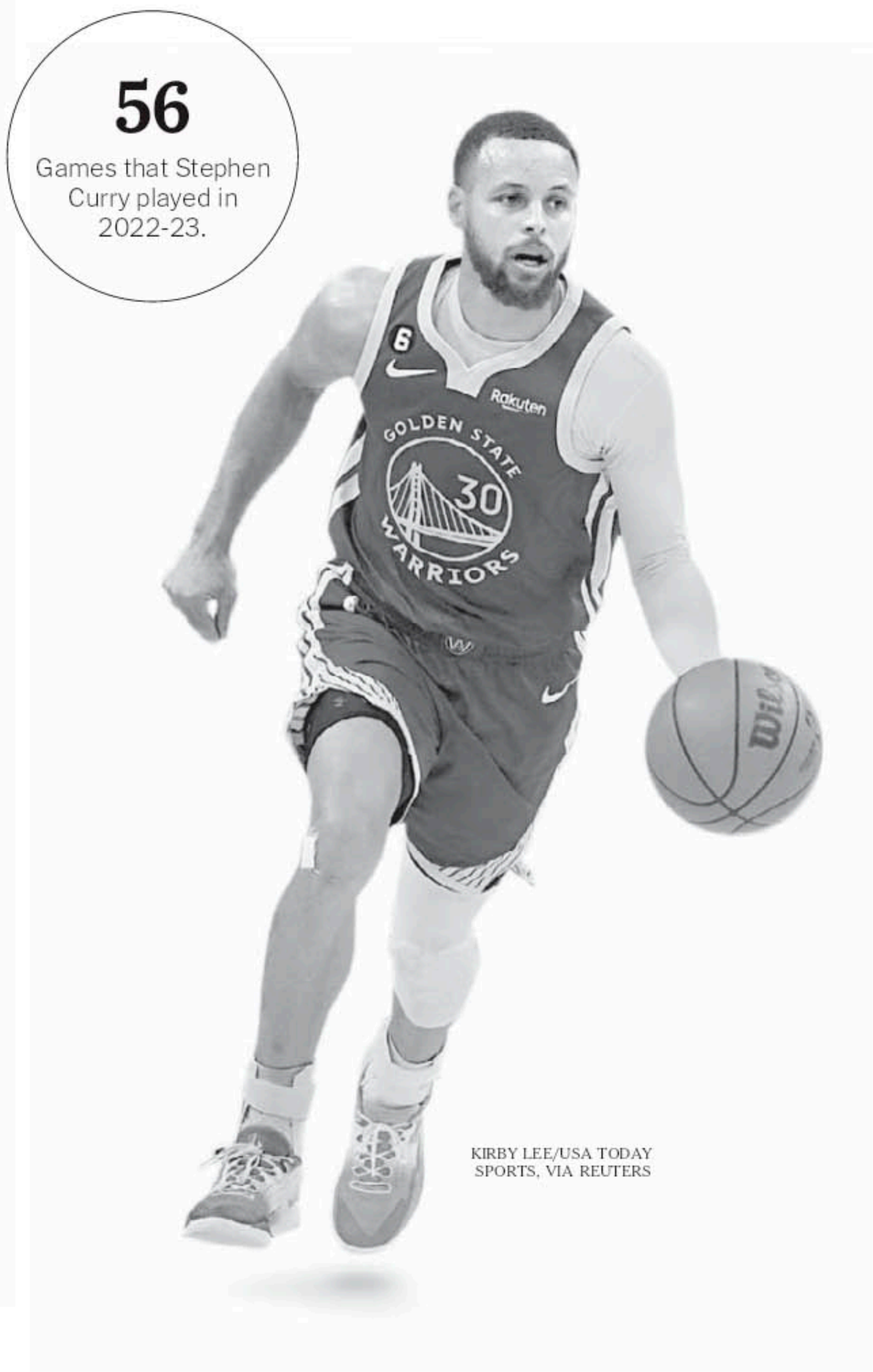


TREVOR RUSZKOWSKI/USA TODAY SPORTS, VIA REUTERS



KIRBY LEE/USA TODAY SPORTS, VIA REUTERS

N.B.A. Wants Teams to Stop Taking a Load Off

When healthy stars sit out, fans and broadcast partners become frustrated, threatening the bottom line

By JON KRAWCZYNSKI
The Athletic

For the past several years, it has not been clear if the N.B.A. fully understood the damage that the league and its teams were doing by resting their star players as a way to preserve them for the rigors of a long season, something called load management.

Teams and players said they were "following the science." Anyone who complained too loudly on behalf of the fans was dismissed as a curmudgeonly dinosaur who didn't understand the advancements in research and data on the matter.

It appears a reckoning has finally arrived.

Adam Silver, the commissioner of the N.B.A., stood behind a lectern last week to discuss the league's new fight against load management. It was a recognition of the precarious position the league finds itself in with fans and television partners about a practice that has, too often in recent seasons, left them feeling slighted.

"There's a sense from all the different constituent groups in the league that this is ultimately about the fans and we've taken this too far," Silver said. "This is an acknowledgment that it's gotten away from us a bit, and that, particularly I think when you see young, healthy players who are resting and it becomes maybe even more a notion of stature around the league as opposed to absolute needed rest, or it's part of being an N.B.A. player that you rest on certain days.

"That's what we're trying to move away from."

It was quite the populist stance for Silver to take. Fans have belabored the practice of resting healthy players for years, gnashing their teeth when they purchase tickets for a game only to find out shortly before tipoff that a high-profile player was sitting out to rest. Though the conversations have not often been public, one would assume executives for ESPN and TNT were not happy either when those players sat out games in which they paid billions to broadcast.

Silver has said load management is an issue for the league. But in February, at the All-Star Game in Salt Lake City, he defended the practice and said there was medical data to support teams giving their most important players a day off here and there.

"This year, we're going to likely break the all-time record for ticket sales," he said at All-Star Weekend. "We're likely going to have the all-time record for season-ticket renewals. So our fans aren't necessarily suggesting that they're that upset with the product that we're presenting."

Seven months later, he is singing a different tune.

"Everyone is acknowledging this is an issue," Silver said after the league's board of governors approved a new star rest policy that is aimed at curtailing the resting of healthy stars for nationally televised games, "and it's an issue for the fans."

Everyone is acknowledging this is an issue right now because the landscape appears to be rapidly changing around the league. For more than a year, team executives have been putting together long-term salary cap strategies that operate under the assumption that the cap will continue to rise drastically, especially after the N.B.A. agrees on a new television contract. The N.B.A.'s current $24 billion deal with ESPN and Warner Bros. Discovery (the parent company of TNT) is set to expire at the end of the 2024-25 season.

When the current contract was agreed upon in 2014, the sheer size of it came as a shock to many. Conversations in league circles over the last couple of seasons have included estimates that the new deal could triple in size as live sports become more important to networks that are trying to keep viewers' attention in the modern content consumption business.

That does not feel quite so certain anymore after a recent standoff between Charter Communications and Disney that led to more than 15 million cable subscribers losing access to ABC, Disney, ESPN and many more channels this month. The issue was resolved, but it was the first real sign that the seemingly boundless leverage ESPN could exert over its distributors was being challenged. Add to that the crumbling of regional sports networks and the shift of viewing habits to streaming, and there is volatility under the league's feet when it comes to how to get their games in front of more eyeballs.

So now that the N.B.A. is taking steps to address one of the most scrutinized aspects of its game, it is doing so out of necessity more than epiphany. The board of governors adopted this new rest policy that states that teams must ensure star players are available for national television and in-season tournament games and must maintain a balance between the number of one-game absences for a star player in road and home games, with a preference for such absences to occur at home.

The N.B.A. also put into its new collective bargaining agreement a clause that requires players to play at least 65 games to qualify for most valuable player and All-N.B.A. honors. This is to incentivize players who can trigger escalators in contracts by winning those awards to appear in as many games as possible.

The advent of an in-season tournament is yet another sign that the league knows its regular season needs a jolt. If the N.B.A. is going to command enormous money from TV partners that are no longer as bulletproof as they once were, it can no longer get away with some of the resting practices the league was employing.

"There's an acknowledgment across the league that we need to return to that principle, that this is an 82-game league," Silver said, adding, "There's a statement of a principle that if you're a healthy player in this league, the expectation is that you're going to play."

That just has not been the case in recent years. Last season, Boston's Jayson Tatum played 74 games. He was the only player on the All-N.B.A. first or second team who played at least 70. The 15 players who made up the three All-N.B.A. teams played in 1,002 of a possible 1,230 games. In 2021-22, those 15 players appeared in 1,010 total games. In addition, there were scores of games missed by other All-Star players who were not All-N.B.A.

Many of those games were missed for legitimate injury reasons, but the steps the league has taken this off-season suggest that it believes the optics of healthy players sitting out is a serious issue. Silver said the league understood that some players needed to rest so that they were healthy for the playoffs, which is the N.B.A.'s most important product. Older players, including LeBron James and Stephen Curry, might need games off so they can preserve their bodies for the deep playoff runs they hope to make. But the league doesn't want Anthony Davis sitting on the same night as James with the Lakers or Klay Thompson and Draymond Green sitting right next to Curry in street clothes, which is something the Warriors have done.

Sports science has had an impact on the league in recent years, with teams hiring more people in the field to examine how players are eating, training, sleeping and, yes, resting. The motivation is noble. More than any other league, the N.B.A. has grown in popularity across the globe on the strength of the allure of its star players. James, Curry, Giannis Antetokounmpo, Luka Doncic and so many more faces are the primary attractions. They are bigger brands than the teams for which they play.

In the interest of preserving the moneymakers and extending their careers, teams have expanded their medical and athletic training staffs to find innovative ways of keeping their players on the court.

The 82-game season is an incredible grind on players, which can chew up their bodies before the most important time of year for the league: the playoffs. Home-road back-to-back games, stretches of three games in four nights or four in seven are taxing, not to mention arriving at a hotel at 3 a.m. to play a game later that night. Add to it the absurd workload that so many of the league's players experienced in the relentless A.A.U. circuit as teenagers, and it's challenging for teams to keep them on the court and on television.

Interestingly, Silver said last week that "frankly, the science is inconclusive" as to whether load management keeps players healthy over the long haul.

"The correlation isn't there," he said.

But there is no doubt that many teams think otherwise, or there would be no reason to institute policies like the one adopted last week to try to discourage teams from either resting a star in nationally televised games or resting multiple stars in any game. Silver said the N.B.A. was not trying to infringe on teams' game-to-game strategies, saying there would be a gradual application of the new rules to allow teams time to adjust. He also made it clear that the league could no longer sit idle, too.

Shortening the season is not an option. That would cost too much money. So it's time to lace up.

"We're trying to deal with some of the most egregious examples," Silver said. "We're letting down the fans, we're letting down our partners by doing that."

Some players, including Curry, have said the load management trend has been instituted and dictated by teams, not the players. Silver said last week that there was a belief in some circles that a certain segment of players saw it as a symbol of status that they were worthy of being rested on a given night. Either way, the league and the players have a lot to lose if they do not find a way to reduce the frustration of fans and television partners on this front.

Years ago, as load management became fashionable, the late Minnesota Timberwolves president and coach Flip Saunders would often speak about the league missing the bigger picture. In the never-ending pursuit of a competitive edge, Saunders believed that the league was risking alienating fans and television partners and forgetting that, first and foremost, N.B.A. basketball is in the entertainment business.

"In terms of the scale of the audience we're reaching when we're a network game, don't rest your players on that night and don't rest multiple star players on any night," Silver said.

As the league negotiates a new television rights deal with traditional networks and also considers options from tech giants like Apple and Amazon, it appears that the bigger picture is finally coming into clearer focus. If the league wants to continue to maximize revenue, the product it is selling has to feature its headline acts as often as possible.

KEVIN C. COX/GETTY IMAGES
The N.B.A. would like to see a lot less of this: Anthony Davis and LeBron James sitting on the sideline in street clothes.

ROB GRAY/ASSOCIATED PRESS
Adam Silver seems to have changed his views about load management.

'There's a sense from all the different constituent groups in the league that this is ultimately about the fans and we've taken this too far.'
ADAM SILVER, left, the N.B.A. commissioner, speaking about the practice of resting star players

Jon Krawczynski is an N.B.A. senior writer for The Athletic.

BASEBALL

During Pennant Run, A Dodgers Reliever Gets the Greatest Gift

By FABIAN ARDAYA
The Athletic

MADDY GRASSY/ASSOCIATED PRESS
With an earned run average of 1.28, the 25-year-old Brusdar Graterol has emerged as a mainstay in the Dodgers' bullpen.

LOS ANGELES — For Brusdar Graterol, the jog from the bullpen gates might as well have been seven years long. But it was everything.

He stood on the mound at Dodger Stadium with the very reason he was standing there in the building. It had been seven years since he'd last seen his mother, Ysmalia, the main reason he chose baseball in the first place.

"She was a mother and father at the same time," Graterol explained in Spanish. "And I've dedicated each second, each minute to her so my mom feels proud of me."

Brusdar Graterol reunites with his mother after a lengthy separation.

For years, that meant doing so from a distance. Restrictions and the political climate in his native Venezuela have made visiting difficult, a hurdle that Graterol and his fellow Venezuelan teammates have endured in the pursuit of fulfilling their baseball dreams. For years, Graterol sought the necessary resources to allow his mother to visit the United States, even as he matriculated his way to the major leagues and onto an international stage. Then, the proper documentation finally came through.

Their reunion, at the airport Sunday after the Los Angeles Dodgers returned from a brief, division-clinching trip in Seattle, "left me paralyzed," Graterol said. She remarked at how big her son had grown, big enough to fire triple-digit fastballs and emerge as one of the Dodgers' most reliable relievers during the stretch run. Graterol struggled to get a word out. Only one real thought came out.

"I told her she smelled like home," Graterol said.

When they'd last seen each other, Graterol was just a teenager with an electric arm. Ysmalia had last watched him pitch at 16 years old, a new arrival at the Minnesota Twins' complex in the Dominican Republic. Her son is 25 now. He won a World Series. He got married and welcomed his first daughter, Aria, in April. Both were on hand along with Ysmalia on Tuesday night, sending Graterol photos from their club-level suite so Graterol would know where to look as he took the mound for the eighth inning. As his music played and his mother stood, Graterol reflected.

He retired the Detroit Tigers' side in order on a tidy 13 pitches, signaled to the sky, then to his mother, and did little to stop the tears that followed. All he could do was cry "out of happiness," he said, digging himself into his glove as he walked off. His manager greeted him with a hug as Graterol pointed to where his mother was stationed. The weight of the moment was a boulder.

"I don't know how they managed it," Dodgers Manager Dave Roberts said. "It was really a special moment, one of the top that I've ever been a part of."

When Graterol returned to the dugout, he paced to the far end of the bench. Then he buried his face in a towel.

"A lot of emotion," he said.

His teammates stopped to check on him. Kiké Hernández took a moment with him. The bench coach Danny Lehmann put his arm around him. His fellow Venezuelans David Peralta and Miguel Rojas offered hugs.

They understood. Peralta said he hasn't been able to see his sister in quite some time. Rojas has gone years without being able to see family members, thankful he got to play in front of his mother, Norma, before she died from breast cancer in January 2022.

"You guys have to understand, especially for Latin players, especially for Venezuelans, what we have to go through, it's not easy for us to bring our family," Peralta said. "We wish we could do it, but all this, whatever, situation we have, it's hard for us to bring our families here. So to finally get the chance to do it, it's a moment that you'll never forget."

"I'm really happy that he got to experience this moment because life is too short," Rojas said. "You never know when it's going to be your last day playing baseball or having your mom." He added, "For me, that's something you can really never take for granted because moments like that make the season even more special."

So they celebrated with him, first when he came back into the dugout and again as they mobbed the field as the Dodgers walked off with a 3-2 win.

Afterward, Graterol brought his mother down on the field where he had realized their collective dream. They took photos together alongside her new granddaughter. After years of missing out on memories, they found one together.

"There were a lot of moments that she missed," Graterol said. "When I debuted, she wasn't here. When I got married, she wasn't here. When my wife had our daughter, she wasn't here. Those were difficult times. Thank God, we did it and she's here."

Her arrival has come just in time. Graterol's emotional night extended his stretch of consecutive scoreless innings to 21, lowering his earned run average to 1.28. The flamethrowing right-hander has blossomed and is enjoying the best season of his career. A big role in October beckons. Now he'll have someone extra special in attendance.

"The goal," Graterol said, "is to have her celebrate the World Series with us."

Fabian Ardaya covers the Los Angeles Dodgers for The Athletic.

AUTO RACING

Driver Aims To Capture The F1 Title (Of 2008)

By VICTOR MATHER

CLIVE MASON/GETTY IMAGES
Felipe Massa, left, lost to Lewis Hamilton by a single point. Many in the sport are uncomfortable re-examining such an old case.

Felipe Massa, the Brazilian racing driver, believes he lost the Formula 1 championship unfairly, and now he plans to ask a British court to have the result overturned.

The twist is that the title he is seeking is from 2008.

Massa lost the championship that year by a single point, but a scandal about a possibly deliberate crash in one race and revelations that have come in the ensuing years have prompted him to seek a reversal.

The long delay has not leavened his determination, Massa said. "I trust and I really believe that for justice that we will show what happened was not correct," he told The Associated Press last month. "I am the champion, and I feel that."

But many in the sport are uncomfortable re-examining such an old case. "If everybody were to open up situations, then the sport would be in disarray," Toto Wolff, the current head of the Mercedes team, told reporters over the weekend.

Despite receiving a formal letter last month from Massa's lawyers seeking damages, Formula 1 has been silent on the claims and did not respond to a request for comment on Wednesday.

The disputed race happened in September 2008 in Singapore. Massa was in first place until Nelson Piquet Jr. crashed, leading organizers to slow the race behind a safety car. This gave another driver, Fernando Alonso, a huge advantage. Although he started the race in 15th place, Alonso was the only driver who had already made a pit stop at the time of the crash, allowing him to take the lead, which he held until the end of the race.

Massa's woes were compounded when he botched his own pit stop and failed to score a point in the race. And at season's end, he lost the title to Lewis Hamilton by one point.

Piquet, the driver who crashed, was Alonso's teammate, immediately prompting speculation that the crash had been intentional. A year after the race, Piquet confessed that his team had told him to crash. After an investigation, Alonso's Renault team was found guilty of conspiracy to fix the race, and some team officials were suspended. But there were no changes to the standings or the title.

Massa's new push comes after Bernie Ecclestone, who was head of Formula 1 at the time of the incident, said in March that he had known about Piquet's intentional crash well before his public confession, but that he had chosen not to act. "We decided not to do anything for now; we wanted to protect the sport and save it from a huge scandal," he told F1-Insider in an interview in German. He added that he persuaded Piquet to stay quiet at the time.

"According to the statutes, we would probably have had to cancel the race in Singapore under these conditions," he said. "That means it would never have taken place for the World Cup standings. Then Felipe Massa would have become world champion and not Lewis Hamilton."

Fifteen years later, Felipe Massa argues that a result is unjust.

"I still feel sorry for Massa today," he added.

When that interview caused a storm in the world of Formula 1, Eccleston, 92, claimed he didn't remember giving it.

Hamilton, who has more wins than any Formula 1 driver in history and has gained even more popularity with his appearances in the documentary "Drive to Survive," has declined to be drawn into the debate. He told reporters last month that he was "not really focused on what happened 15 years ago."

Massa continued driving in Formula 1 until 2017 but never did win the title. For Hamilton, it was the first of what would be seven championships.

If Formula 1 is concerned that changing the results of an old championship would open up a can of worms, it cannot be blamed; there are worms aplenty. With his seven titles, Hamilton is currently tied with Michael Schumacher for the record; losing his 2008 title to Massa would drop him to second place. In the March interview, Ecclestone said: "Michael Schumacher is still the sole record world champion. Even if the statistics say otherwise."

Other disputed titles could be relitigated as well. In the last race of the 2021 season, with a razor-close championship in the balance, an official allowed a final racing lap, giving Max Verstappen the chance to pass Hamilton and win the title.

Formula 1 later acknowledged the ruling was an error, but declined to change the standings.

Should the 2008 championship be reopened, Hamilton's Mercedes team could ask for a reversal based on the 2021 mistake. Wolff, the director of the Mercedes team, acknowledged that he was following the Massa case "with interest" and with an eye on that disputed title.

It is not the first time that old sporting titles have remained controversial long after they have been added to the record books. The Italian soccer team Lazio remains aggrieved that it was not awarded one league title after a season was halted.

And if 2008 seems like a long time ago, consider that the title Lazio still claims is from 1915.

TENNIS

A Generational Shift at the Laver Cup

By CINDY SHMERLER

MAANSI SRIVASTAVA/THE NEW YORK TIMES
Ben Shelton, 20, made it to the U.S. Open semifinals this month.

Coming into this year's U.S. Open, Ben Shelton felt that he had something to prove. But it didn't have anything to do with the final major championship of the year, where he reached the semifinals before falling to the eventual winner, Novak Djokovic.

Instead, Shelton thought he had to justify his inclusion on the six-man Team World in the Laver Cup, an elite competition that begins Friday at Rogers Arena in Vancouver, British Columbia.

"When the announcement first came out, I saw all these comments on Instagram, like, 'Why did you take him? Why? Why this guy? There's so many higher-ranked players,'" said Shelton, who entered the Open at No. 47 in the world but is No. 19 after his semifinal finish in New York. "I wanted to show people that maybe I deserved to be on the team."

The Laver Cup began in Prague in 2017 and trades continents each year between Europe and North America. Team Europe, captained by Bjorn Borg, who won 11 majors, features Andrey Rublev, Casper Ruud, Hubert Hurkacz, Gaël Monfils, Alejandro Davidovich Fokina and Arthur Fils. John McEnroe, who won seven major singles titles, is captain of Team World. His players are Shelton, Taylor Fritz, Frances Tiafoe, Tommy Paul, Felix Auger-Aliassime and Francisco Cerundolo.

Last year's event in London was noteworthy because it featured Roger Federer's final match before retirement. His greatest rivals, Djokovic, Rafael Nadal and Andy Murray, all showed up to honor him. His last match, a doubles loss with Nadal to Tiafoe and Jack Sock, was a tearful tribute to the 20-time major champion.

This year's Laver Cup represents a generational shift in the sport. Federer has retired, and Nadal, 37, has not played an ATP match since the Australian Open in January because of injuries.

Murray, at age 36, is not the player he was when he captured the U.S. Open in 2012, Wimbledon in 2013 and 2016, and became world No. 1 in 2016. And Djokovic, who won his 24th major at the U.S. Open less than two weeks ago and is the current No. 1, is focusing on winning another major.

"The end of an era heralds the beginning of a new one," said Rod Laver — the player for whom the competition is named — who was part of his own generation's rivalries with Ken Rosewall, John Newcombe, Arthur Ashe and Jan Kodes, among others. "Today's leading younger players are jockeying for pole position, and we'll get to see them competing in a team setting in Vancouver, which weaves the eras together."

McEnroe, who had his own spirited rivalries with Borg, Jimmy Connors and Ivan Lendl throughout the 1970s and '80s, lamented that the Laver Cup had not generated the same appeal among the players as the Ryder Cup, the team event in golf.

"The goal was to make it like golf's Ryder Cup, where everyone was waiting until the last minute to see who was hottest, but everyone was available," McEnroe said. "It doesn't seem to be the case now. It's tougher to get everyone committed."

For a team event, young players step up as older ones fade.

Carlos Alcaraz, the reigning Wimbledon champ and world No. 2, has declined to play, as has the U.S. Open runner-up and the world No. 3, Daniil Medvedev. But six of the next 11 ranked players are competing this year, and three others, Alexander Zverev, Stefanos Tsitsipas and Alex de Minaur, have played in the past.

This year, Team Europe will play without its powerful core of Federer, Nadal, Murray, Djokovic, Alcaraz and Medvedev. Winners in each of the first four years, the Europeans lost on the last day last year when Team World's Auger-Aliassime beat Djokovic and Tiafoe outlasted Tsitsipas.

MIKE STOBE/GETTY IMAGES
Andrey Rublev, 25, likes the team aspect of the Laver Cup.

Paul, who beat Alcaraz in a tournament in Canada this summer but then lost to Shelton at the U.S. Open, said he was keenly aware of the void left by the Big Four.

"It's definitely a big loss for tennis in general, not just Laver Cup," he said. "It obviously gives us a pretty good opportunity."

Fritz, who last year won his only Laver Cup singles match, acknowledged the generational shift.

"I think times are definitely changing," said Fritz, who is the top-ranked American at No. 8. "It's going to be a really different Laver Cup this year with how Team Europe is made up."

Tiafoe, who lost in the U.S. Open quarterfinals to Shelton, agreed.

"Yeah, it's generational," Tiafoe said during the Open. "I think the fans are going to appreciate the new faces."

Before he first played in 2021, Rublev was skeptical of the event, which awards no ATP ranking points.

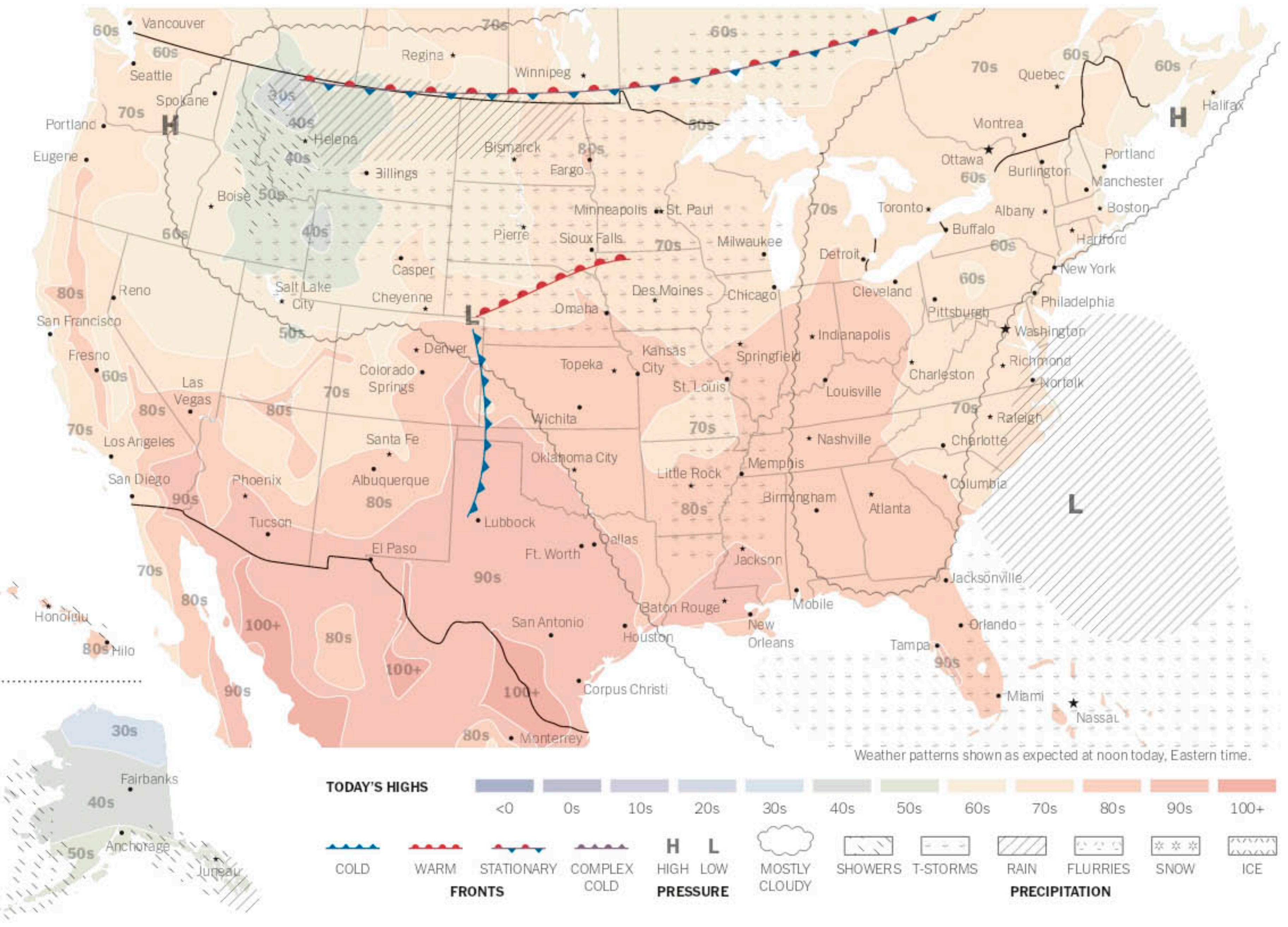
"When I was watching on TV, I was thinking, the way they are so excited, it's not real," he said. "But when you get there, you want to win."

Seismic movements in tennis are nothing new. After Laver and his rivals, and Borg-McEnroe-Connors-Lendl, came Pete Sampras, Andre Agassi, Jim Courier and Michael Chang. Then came Federer, Nadal, Djokovic and Murray. Now Alcaraz has emerged to challenge Djokovic, as have Shelton, who turns 21 next month, and others.

"I'm pretty pumped to be in the team atmosphere," Shelton said at the U.S. Open. He added, " I'm going to be just as amped and emotional in Vancouver as I was here."

Weather Report

Meteorology by **AccuWeather**



Metropolitan Forecast

TODAY ....Some sunshine, then clouds

High 70. High pressure will keep the region dry, though sunshine will begin to fade behind clouds. Winds will be 8 to 16 miles per hour. Temperatures will be below average.

TONIGHT ....Some rain late

Low 58. An approaching tropical rainstorm will bring a cloudy sky, with some rain arriving later at night. Winds will be light with temperatures near average.

TOMORROW ....Tropical rainstorm

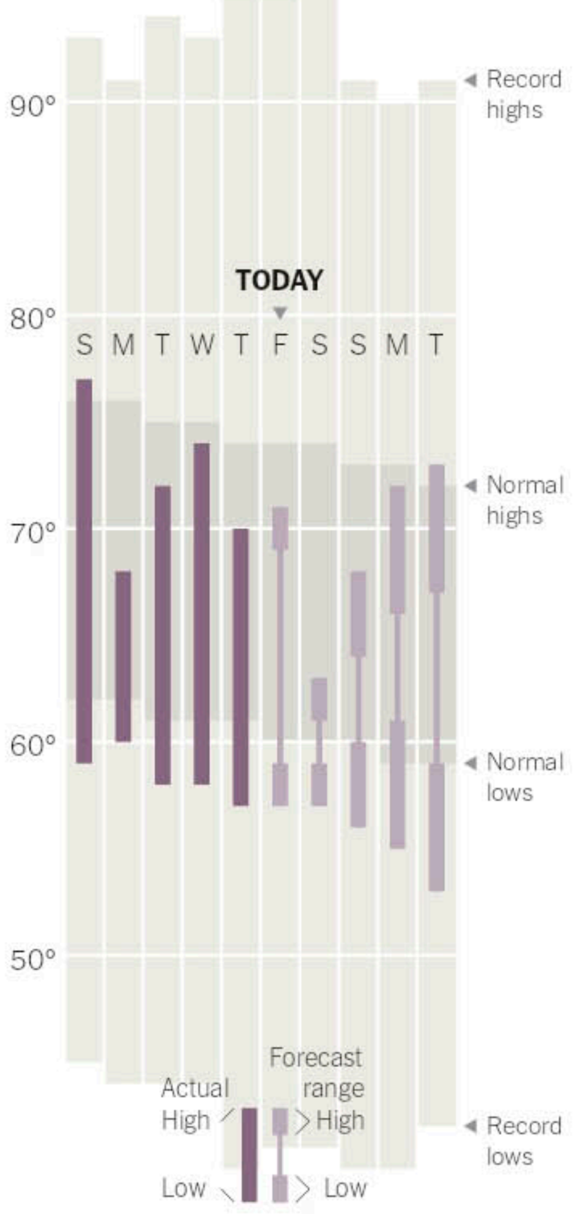
High 62. A tropical rainstorm will bring clouds, along with rain and gusty winds. The rain can lead to flooding. Temperatures will be well below average.

SUNDAY ....A little rain, breezy

A tropical rainstorm will linger in the area, with some rain and gusty winds expected to persist. The wind will be 15 to 25 m.p.h. High 66.

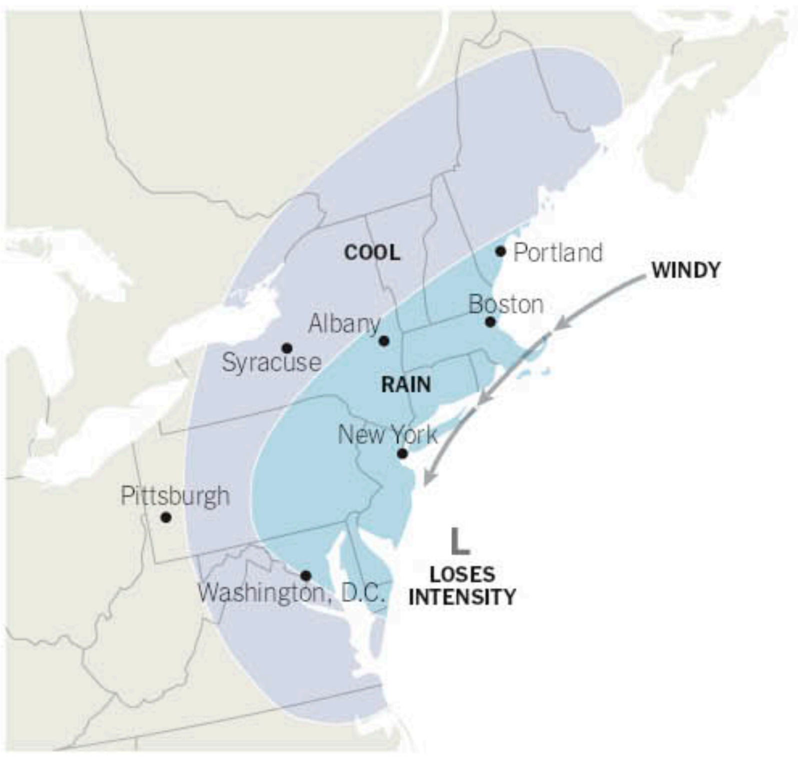
MONDAY
TUESDAY ....Lingering showers

On Monday, showers may linger during the morning hours, and then some sunshine may return. High 69. On Tuesday, it will be partly sunny and dry. High 70.



Highlight: Rain Continues into Sunday

Rain associated with a tropical rainstorm off the southern New Jersey coast will continue across portions of the Northeast on Sunday. North-to-northeast winds will gust over 30 miles per hour along the coast with rough surf and some minor beach erosion. The combination of cloud cover, rain and wind will make temperatures feel like the 50s and low 60s across the region during the afternoon.



National Forecast

A budding tropical wind and rainstorm will creep northward off the Carolina coast today. This storm is expected to become a named tropical or subtropical storm this weekend as it pushes onshore and spreads rain from eastern North Carolina to southern New England.

Enough rain will fall to lead to urban flooding and travel delays while wind may trigger regional power outages. Seas will build, and some beach erosion and coastal flooding will result due to the strong rip currents. A belt of sunshine will extend from Maine to Alabama. Thunderstorms will develop from Wyoming to Minnesota, Wisconsin and Mississippi.

As rain falls on Montana and part of North Dakota, the zone from Washington to California, Arizona, New Mexico and much of Texas will be dry.

Metropolitan Almanac

In Central Park, for the 13 hours ended at 1 p.m. yesterday.

Temperature

Avg. daily departure from normal this month .... +2.2°

Avg. daily departure from normal this year .... +2.3°

Reservoir levels (New York City water supply)

Yesterday 91%
Est. normal 78%

Precipitation (in inches)

Yesterday 0.00
Record 5.54

For the last 30 days
Actual 6.72
Normal 4.25

For the last 365 days
Actual 52.47
Normal 49.52

LAST 30 DAYS

Air pressure

High .... 30.31 noon
Low .... 30.22 1 a.m.

Humidity

High .... 77% 4 a.m.
Low .... 54% noon

Cooling Degree Days

An index of fuel consumption that tracks how far the day's mean temperature rose above 65

Yesterday.. 0
So far this month.. 177
So far this season (since January 1) 1195
Normal to date for the season 1181

Trends

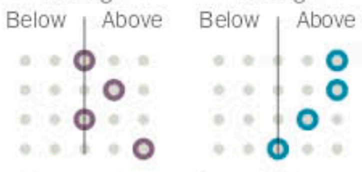


Chart shows how recent temperature and precipitation trends compare with those of the last 30 years.

Recreational Forecast

Sun, Moon and Planets

First Quarter	Full	Last Quarter	New
Sep. 22	Sep. 29 5:57 a.m.	Oct. 6	Oct. 14 1:53 p.m.

Sun	RISE	6:43 a.m.	**Moon**	R	2:36 p.m.
	SET	6:54 p.m.		S	11:14 p.m.
	NEXT R	6:44 a.m.		R	3:36 p.m.
Jupiter	S	10:41 a.m.	**Mars**	R	8:13 a.m.
	R	8:47 p.m.		S	7:35 p.m.
Saturn	S	4:31 a.m.	**Venus**	R	3:25 a.m.
	R	5:52 p.m.		S	4:51 p.m.

Boating

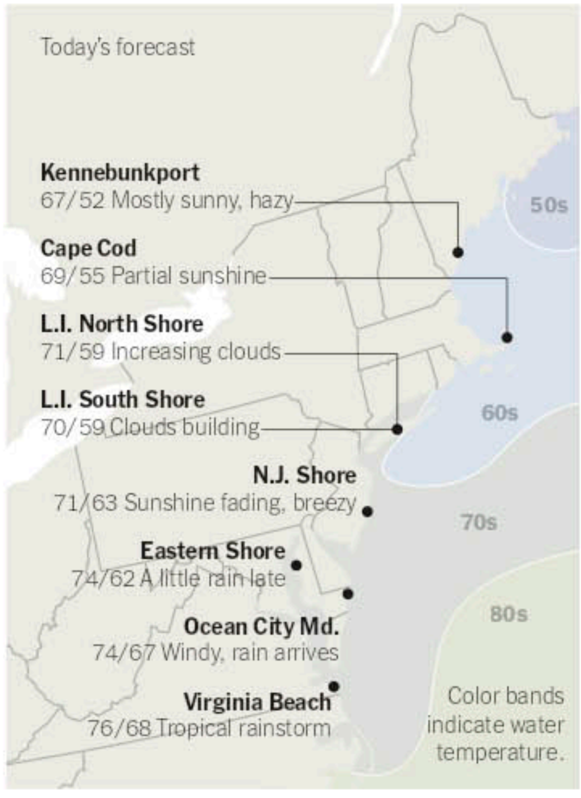
From Montauk Point to Sandy Hook, N.J., out to 20 nautical miles, including Long Island Sound and New York Harbor.

Winds will be out of the east at 10-15 knots. Waves will be around 1 foot on New York Harbor and Long Island Sound, and 3-5 feet on the open ocean. Visibility will be unrestricted to the horizon.

High Tides

Atlantic City	12:27 a.m.	1:11 p.m.
Barnegat Inlet	12:57 a.m.	1:30 p.m.
The Battery	1:24 a.m.	1:51 p.m.
Beach Haven	2:23 a.m.	2:53 p.m.
Bridgeport	4:50 a.m.	5:07 p.m.
City Island	4:29 a.m.	4:48 p.m.
Fire Island Lt.	1:51 a.m.	2:21 p.m.
Montauk Point	2:37 a.m.	2:58 p.m.
Northport	4:55 a.m.	5:17 p.m.
Port Washington	4:39 a.m.	5:03 p.m.
Sandy Hook	1:05 a.m.	1:35 p.m.
Shinnecock Inlet	12:59 a.m.	1:31 p.m.
Stamford	4:47 a.m.	5:10 p.m.
Tarrytown	3:13 a.m.	3:40 p.m.
Willets Point	4:31 a.m.	4:49 p.m.

Beach and Ocean Temperatures



High pressure will keep the Northeast beaches from New Jersey to New England dry, though the risk for rough surf and rip currents will be elevated. A developing tropical system will spread rain into some southeastern Virginia and Delmarva beaches, along with gusty winds.

Cities

High/low temperatures for the 16 hours ended at 4 p.m. yesterday, Eastern time, and precipitation (in inches) for the 16 hours ended at 4 p.m. yesterday. Expected conditions for today and tomorrow.

C	Clouds	**S**	Sun
F	Fog	**Sn**	Snow
H	Haze	**SS**	Snow showers
I	Ice	**T**	Thunderstorms
PC	Partly cloudy	**Tr**	Trace
R	Rain	**W**	Windy
Sh	Showers	**–**	Not available

N.Y.C. region	Yesterday	Today	Tomorrow
New York City	70/ 57 0	70/ 60 PC	62/ 58 R
Bridgeport	70/ 52 0	71/ 58 PC	62/ 55 R
Caldwell	72/ 50 0	71/ 57 PC	62/ 57 R
Danbury	70/ 45 0	71/ 54 PC	62/ 52 R
Islip	70/ 56 0	70/ 59 PC	66/ 58 R
Newark	76/ 56 0	73/ 60 PC	63/ 57 R
Trenton	72/ 51 0	70/ 57 PC	62/ 55 R
White Plains	70/ 51 0	69/ 53 PC	60/ 54 R

United States	Yesterday	Today	Tomorrow
Albany	72/ 49 0	73/ 52 PC	65/ 51 R
Albuquerque	83/ 59 0	83/ 59 S	78/ 57 C
Anchorage	52/ 38 0.09	50/ 37 PC	53/ 38 PC
Atlanta	82/ 63 0	82/ 62 S	83/ 62 S
Atlantic City	73/ 61 0	71/ 64 W	69/ 62 R
Austin	97/ 74 0	98/ 76 PC	98/ 74 PC
Baltimore	80/ 59 0	75/ 61 C	66/ 59 R
Baton Rouge	94/ 72 0	92/ 72 T	91/ 71 S
Birmingham	85/ 64 0	84/ 62 PC	86/ 64 S
Boise	65/ 45 0.08	68/ 48 PC	76/ 51 S
Boston	71/ 57 0	69/ 58 S	63/ 57 R
Buffalo	76/ 48 0	78/ 51 S	73/ 52 C
Burlington	71/ 49 0	73/ 54 S	69/ 52 C
Casper	75/ 45 0.02	72/ 42 T	65/ 42 W
Charlotte	82/ 62 0	78/ 60 PC	77/ 58 R
Chattanooga	85/ 63 0	85/ 62 S	86/ 60 S
Chicago	77/ 64 0.04	78/ 63 PC	81/ 60 PC
Cincinnati	82/ 60 0	84/ 58 S	81/ 54 S
Cleveland	80/ 60 0	76/ 55 S	72/ 55 C
Colorado Springs	79/ 50 0	80/ 49 S	78/ 49 S
Columbus	83/ 58 0	82/ 54 S	78/ 52 S
Concord, N.H.	74/ 46 0	71/ 50 PC	61/ 47 R
Dallas-Ft. Worth	92/ 76 0.36	94/ 77 PC	96/ 79 T
Denver	82/ 50 0	83/ 51 S	78/ 47 S
Des Moines	78/ 60 0	76/ 64 T	79/ 61 T
Detroit	81/ 62 0	77/ 57 S	76/ 55 S
El Paso	91/ 72 0.02	96/ 69 S	95/ 68 S
Fargo	82/ 57 0.20	82/ 63 T	73/ 59 R
Hartford	74/ 50 0	73/ 53 PC	63/ 54 R
Honolulu	89/ 77 0.04	90/ 76 Sh	91/ 77 Sh
Houston	94/ 76 0.04	93/ 76 S	94/ 75 S
Indianapolis	81/ 61 0	85/ 59 S	85/ 55 PC
Jackson	95/ 68 0	91/ 67 PC	94/ 68 S
Jacksonville	83/ 67 0.19	83/ 63 T	84/ 62 PC
Kansas City	83/ 65 0	82/ 66 T	85/ 63 T
Key West	89/ 80 0.72	89/ 79 Sh	88/ 80 T
Las Vegas	87/ 64 0	85/ 68 PC	88/ 66 S
Lexington	83/ 58 0	86/ 56 S	83/ 51 S
Little Rock	92/ 70 0	82/ 67 T	91/ 70 PC
Los Angeles	71/ 58 Tr	75/ 61 PC	78/ 59 PC
Louisville	85/ 61 0	87/ 61 S	85/ 59 S
Memphis	90/ 68 0	85/ 68 T	90/ 71 PC
Miami	88/ 75 0.48	87/ 74 T	87/ 75 T
Milwaukee	78/ 66 0.02	76/ 65 PC	76/ 62 C
Mpls.-St. Paul	83/ 60 0	78/ 62 T	78/ 61 T
Nashville	87/ 60 0	87/ 61 S	89/ 58 S
New Orleans	90/ 76 0	90/ 74 S	91/ 73 S
Norfolk	79/ 70 0	76/ 68 R	73/ 62 R
Oklahoma City	81/ 66 0.15	88/ 69 T	91/ 68 T
Omaha	81/ 63 0	80/ 64 T	75/ 59 R
Orlando	87/ 72 0.15	88/ 70 T	89/ 69 PC
Philadelphia	77/ 56 0	73/ 62 PC	64/ 60 R
Phoenix	100/ 73 0	96/ 76 S	98/ 72 C
Pittsburgh	79/ 54 0	75/ 53 PC	71/ 50 C
Portland, Me.	72/ 51 0	67/ 49 PC	61/ 49 R
Portland, Ore.	75/ 53 0	79/ 56 PC	69/ 56 R
Providence	73/ 53 0	71/ 54 PC	62/ 56 R
Raleigh	84/ 62 0	77/ 62 R	67/ 60 R
Reno	62/ 45 0.08	72/ 47 S	77/ 50 S
Richmond	83/ 61 0	76/ 61 C	68/ 60 R
Rochester	72/ 44 0	74/ 49 S	71/ 52 PC
Sacramento	84/ 53 0	84/ 54 S	82/ 54 S
Salt Lake City	63/ 51 0.38	64/ 47 T	71/ 50 S
San Antonio	98/ 77 0	98/ 78 S	99/ 77 PC
San Diego	73/ 64 Tr	74/ 66 C	75/ 61 PC
San Francisco	73/ 56 0	73/ 56 PC	70/ 58 PC
San Jose	78/ 55 0	77/ 55 PC	76/ 53 PC
San Juan	93/ 80 0.05	92/ 80 C	94/ 80 C
Seattle	70/ 50 0	76/ 52 PC	66/ 50 R
Sioux Falls	80/ 59 0.95	79/ 61 T	72/ 53 R
Spokane	67/ 50 0	63/ 49 S	69/ 50 PC
St. Louis	81/ 66 0.02	81/ 64 T	87/ 64 PC
St. Thomas	91/ 81 0.04	90/ 80 T	92/ 81 C
Syracuse	72/ 47 0	76/ 51 F	72/ 51 PC
Tampa	89/ 72 0.35	90/ 71 T	87/ 71 S
Toledo	83/ 58 0	81/ 54 S	77/ 54 S
Tucson	96/ 70 0	96/ 66 S	94/ 65 PC
Tulsa	83/ 67 0.06	83/ 69 T	86/ 68 T
Virginia Beach	78/ 69 0	75/ 68 R	74/ 64 R
Washington	81/ 61 0	75/ 61 PC	67/ 59 R
Wichita	84/ 64 0.15	83/ 69 T	87/ 58 T
Wilmington, Del.	79/ 53 0	74/ 61 PC	65/ 59 R

Africa	Yesterday	Today	Tomorrow
Algiers	84/ 64 0	85/ 65 PC	83/ 58 PC
Cairo	91/ 74 0	92/ 72 S	93/ 72 S
Cape Town	63/ 54 0.04	65/ 53 C	63/ 53 PC
Dakar	88/ 78 0	89/ 80 T	90/ 79 PC
Johannesburg	82/ 56 0	84/ 59 S	84/ 57 PC
Nairobi	84/ 59 0.08	79/ 59 PC	82/ 59 PC
Tunis	91/ 73 0	90/ 74 PC	85/ 68 PC

Asia/Pacific	Yesterday	Today	Tomorrow
Baghdad	114/ 73 0	110/ 76 S	110/ 73 PC
Bangkok	93/ 75 0.30	94/ 79 T	93/ 79 T
Beijing	83/ 58 0	84/ 59 C	76/ 58 S
Damascus	93/ 61 0	97/ 60 S	100/ 63 S
Hong Kong	92/ 81 0	91/ 81 C	91/ 81 Sh
Jakarta	96/ 74 0.19	94/ 74 PC	93/ 74 Sh
Jerusalem	82/ 63 0	88/ 65 S	90/ 66 S
Karachi	97/ 81 0	95/ 82 T	94/ 81 PC
Manila	91/ 80 0.31	91/ 78 T	89/ 78 T
Mumbai	88/ 81 0.26	86/ 78 R	86/ 79 R
New Delhi	99/ 81 0.10	93/ 80 T	91/ 79 Sh
Riyadh	104/ 79 0	107/ 81 PC	108/ 81 S
Seoul	73/ 61 Tr	82/ 58 S	84/ 63 PC
Shanghai	80/ 71 0.02	76/ 69 R	75/ 70 R
Singapore	90/ 77 0.19	86/ 78 T	89/ 78 PC
Sydney	73/ 58 0.04	67/ 52 PC	67/ 53 PC
Taipei City	90/ 79 0	95/ 77 S	95/ 78 S
Tehran	92/ 70 0	86/ 67 S	85/ 67 S
Tokyo	86/ 76 0.21	83/ 72 T	79/ 69 Sh

Europe	Yesterday	Today	Tomorrow
Amsterdam	67/ 59 0.99	61/ 51 Sh	62/ 49 Sh
Athens	88/ 71 0	86/ 70 S	88/ 70 S
Berlin	84/ 55 0	69/ 52 Sh	68/ 49 S
Brussels	67/ 58 0.45	62/ 49 Sh	62/ 45 PC
Budapest	82/ 58 0.15	84/ 63 PC	69/ 59 Sh
Copenhagen	72/ 62 0	66/ 56 C	64/ 51 Sh
Dublin	60/ 43 0	56/ 38 PC	59/ 55 R
Edinburgh	60/ 47 0	60/ 40 PC	58/ 50 PC
Frankfurt	77/ 55 0.17	66/ 48 PC	66/ 44 S
Geneva	77/ 61 0.05	67/ 51 Sh	63/ 46 Sh
Helsinki	70/ 58 0	70/ 61 PC	64/ 55 R
Istanbul	81/ 64 0	79/ 66 S	83/ 67 S
Kyiv	82/ 57 0	80/ 59 S	81/ 60 S
Lisbon	73/ 64 0.24	74/ 58 PC	80/ 60 PC
London	64/ 50 0.09	64/ 47 PC	63/ 51 PC
Madrid	66/ 58 0.16	71/ 47 S	74/ 48 S
Moscow	66/ 57 0.08	75/ 52 PC	75/ 53 S
Nice	72/ 64 0.50	78/ 61 W	74/ 61 T
Oslo	63/ 59 0.38	62/ 49 R	61/ 46 Sh
Paris	68/ 59 0.56	66/ 49 Sh	66/ 48 PC
Prague	77/ 54 0	65/ 49 R	65/ 46 C
Rome	82/ 67 0.14	81/ 67 PC	76/ 58 Sh
St. Petersburg	70/ 59 0.15	73/ 58 S	75/ 58 PC
Stockholm	71/ 57 0	67/ 52 R	63/ 48 PC
Vienna	82/ 61 0	79/ 58 C	67/ 56 R
Warsaw	79/ 54 0	80/ 60 PC	69/ 54 C

North America	Yesterday	Today	Tomorrow
Acapulco	90/ 77 0	92/ 77 S	92/ 78 T
Bermuda	81/ 74 0.15	84/ 77 T	85/ 77 S
Edmonton	50/ 31 0	71/ 45 W	68/ 51 PC
Guadalajara	80/ 62 0	88/ 63 PC	89/ 63 PC
Havana	92/ 68 0.11	90/ 71 PC	90/ 69 T
Kingston	93/ 83 0	93/ 83 T	93/ 82 T
Martinique	91/ 77 0.40	91/ 76 T	92/ 77 T
Mexico City	75/ 57 0	83/ 56 PC	83/ 56 S
Monterrey	90/ 69 0	96/ 71 S	98/ 72 S
Montreal	68/ 49 0	73/ 54 S	72/ 54 S
Nassau	89/ 77 0.22	87/ 76 T	88/ 77 PC
Panama City	89/ 75 0.10	90/ 75 T	89/ 75 T
Quebec City	67/ 46 0	71/ 48 S	70/ 50 S
Santo Domingo	92/ 74 0	92/ 75 T	91/ 75 PC
Toronto	70/ 54 0	70/ 54 S	71/ 56 C
Vancouver	62/ 50 0	66/ 52 PC	62/ 52 R
Winnipeg	69/ 51 0	71/ 53 C	71/ 57 C

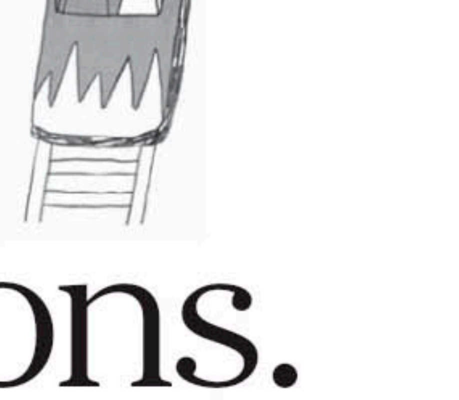
South America	Yesterday	Today	Tomorrow
Buenos Aires	69/ 61 0.05	62/ 55 W	67/ 53 C
Caracas	93/ 75 0.08	93/ 76 T	95/ 75 T
Lima	69/ 66 0	71/ 65 PC	70/ 65 PC
Quito	74/ 39 0	72/ 43 PC	69/ 45 R
Recife	83/ 76 0.02	82/ 74 Sh	84/ 76 PC
Rio de Janeiro	84/ 72 0	85/ 74 S	83/ 74 S
Santiago	66/ 48 0	61/ 49 C	67/ 44 C

The New York Times

The joys.

The tribulations.

The twists.



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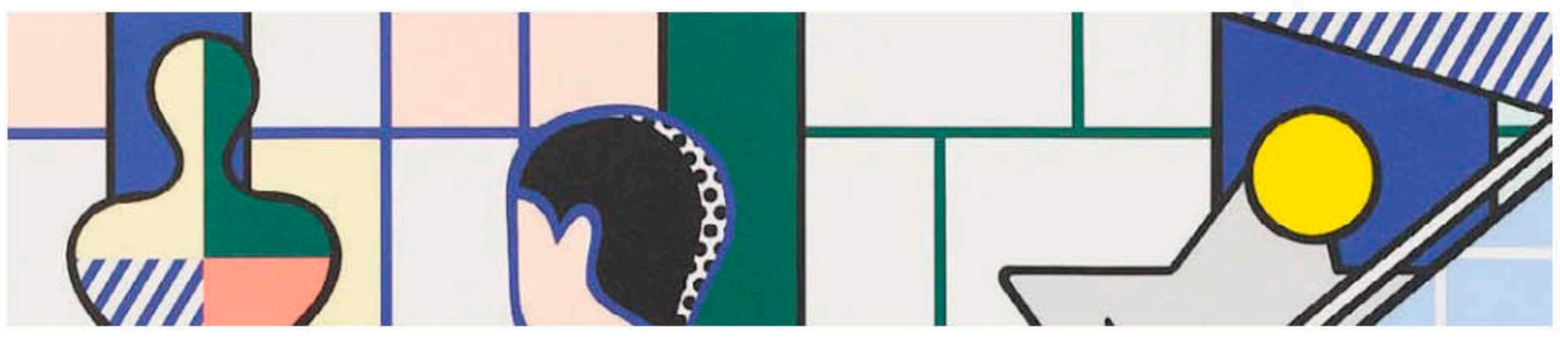
6 ART

A rejected Pop mural arrives in New York.

BY DEBORAH SOLOMON



12 FILM

Taking a look at Kubrick's first feature.

BY J. HOBERMAN

HOLLAND COTTER | ART REVIEW

JEENAH MOON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

"Family Portrait (The Bellelli Family)" by Edgar Degas, included in "Manet/Degas," an exhibition of works by Degas and Édouard Manet that opens Sunday at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Manet and Degas, Pas de Deux

The Met teams up the two painters, an odd couple, for a powerhouse exhibition that encourages viewers to compare and contrast.

Manet/Degas
Metropolitan Museum of Art
CRITIC'S PICK

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART'S galleries for 19th- and early-20th-century European paintings and sculpture are among the museum's buzziest places. Packed, always. Why? Because we like what we know. Here, we're in a secular world of relatable narratives — about work, play, sex, fashion — set in smoke-gray cities and landscapes as lush but tame as those of Central Park. No halos here, no hellfire, few kings or queens, pretty much no suffering or death. Or so it would seem at a glance.

And so it might seem on a quick trot through "Manet/Degas," a powerhouse exhibition of 160 oil paintings, prints, pastels and drawings installed immediately adjacent to those permanent galleries, and guaranteed to bring in its own heavy-to-overwhelming foot traffic. Imported from Paris, where it debuted at the Musée d'Orsay earlier this year, and opening here on Sunday, it's the major tee-off event of the Met season. And overall, it's about as good as exhibitions get.

Everything's here: charismatic art, deep information, an alluring installation, and a theme with plenty of flex and quirks. The result is a complex, attention-absorbing presentation of many interlinked parts, with a combustion chamber at its center.

There are also imbalances of attention and energy. There's a hint of this in the title. Why is it out of alphabetical order? Why not "Degas/Manet"? On a practical level you could put the choice down to chronology: Manet was the older of the pair by two years, born in 1832. But in the end, the billing feels like a critical ranking, leaving a naturally recessive artist, one we still need

CONTINUED ON PAGE C8

JESSE GREEN | THEATER REVIEW

Lunar Eclipse
Shakespeare & Company in Lenox, Mass.

MAGGIE HALL

Reed Birney and Karen Allen in "Lunar Eclipse," directed by James Warwick.

Grief Comes Out at Night, And Tears Often Follow

Donald Margulies's new play centers on an ornery farmer who is facing his sadness.

LENOX, MASS. — "We realize he's crying" must be among the scariest stage directions an actor could find at the top of a script. How do you get from zero to tears with no context?

That's the challenge Donald Margulies puts before the actor playing George in "Lunar Eclipse," his new two-character play at Shakespeare & Company in Lenox, Mass. And wait, it gets harder. As we will soon learn, George, a Midwestern farmer in late middle age, is stony and unsentimental, the opposite of a weeper. Yet as the lights slowly rise on his dark night of the soul, there he is anyway: a heaving, racking torrent of sobs.

Is it thoughtless to say how lucky we are that the heaving and racking come from Reed Birney?

It's certainly lucky for Margulies and his somewhat overripe tear-jerker, which opened on Sunday. Often threatening to drown in a generalized wetness, the play benefits immensely from the detail and discipline of Birney's superb performance. He doesn't so much produce emotions as shed them.

After nearly 50 years onstage, that's no surprise; he's won Obie, Drama Desk and

CONTINUED ON PAGE C4

WEEKEND ROUNDUP

An Opportunity to Join the Movement

There's outdoor dance (class included), a comedian on the rise and a celebration of trees, for starters.

JOHN ENG

The Mark Morris Dance Group, which is scheduled to appear at Harbor View Lawn on Saturday. The company will teach a dance class and then perform.

1

DANCE
MARK MORRIS DANCE GROUP

Sept. 23 at Pier 1 Harbor View Lawn, Brooklyn Bridge Park, Brooklyn

The choreographer Mark Morris is celebrated for his poetic, playful and keenly musical dances, which have made his company, now over 40 years old, a New York institution and a global success. The troupe has performed at the world's grandest opera houses, but on Saturday it will appear in its own backyard at a modest outdoor venue — albeit one with spectacular Manhattan skyline views — and has invited audiences to join it onstage.

At 2 p.m., company members will teach a family-friendly dance class for all ages, followed by a performance at 3 p.m. featuring a sampling of Morris's choreography. The program includes "Dancing Honeymoon" (1998), a boisterous romp featuring Ethan Iverson's arrangements of 1920s pop songs; "Greek to Me," a brief, charming solo from the same year; and "Water," a work for 14 dancers set to music by Handel that made its debut at this park two years ago. Free admission. RSVPs via the park's website are encouraged, but are not required.
BRIAN SCHAEFER

2

COMEDY
CHRISTINA CATHERINE MARTINEZ

Sept. 24 at Littlefield, 635 Sackett Street, Brooklyn

Christina Catherine Martinez's comedy straddles the line between stand-up and performance art. Martinez lives in two worlds: She is a Los Angeles native whose art criticism has appeared in The Los Angeles Times, Artforum and elsewhere, and she has been named a comedian on the rise by both Vulture and Time Out. Martinez also co-starred in FX/Hulu's late-night sketch series, "Two Pink Doors," and served as a creative consultant for "The Eric Andre Show" on Adult Swim.

Her headlining show on Sunday at 8 p.m. at Littlefield includes stand-up as well as "a slide-show lounge act about the decline of Democracy." She'll be supported by performances from Ikechukwu Ufomadu, River L. Ramirez, Pierce Campion and "Jesus of Nazareth" (the comedian Cory Peter Lane). Tickets start at $12 and are available via Eventbrite.
SEAN L. McCARTHY

3

CLASSICAL
HAN CHEN

Sept. 24 at National Sawdust, 80 North Sixth Street, Brooklyn

This young pianist revels in cutting-edge pieces. After making his recorded debut on the Naxos label with some sterling interpretations of Liszt, he has taken on the piano works of Gyorgy Ligeti as well as those of contemporary artists like Thomas Adès. (Chen's take on the solo piano work "Blanca Variations" is recommended for anyone who enjoyed Adès's opera "The Exterminating Angel.")

For this Williamsburg neighborhood date, Chen expands on his recent CD of Ligeti's piano music. For each of the 18 études by the Hungarian master, the pianist has commissioned a living composer to write a companion piece. (He'll play all the works — 36 in total — at this concert.) In addition to Ligeti himself, the program includes established figures like Molly Joyce and Nina Young as well as an intriguing coterie of up-and-coming compositional talents. Tickets cost $23 for the show, which begins at 7:30 p.m. *SETH COLTER WALLS*

4

KIDS
'POWER OF TREES'

Through Oct. 22 at Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 990 Washington Avenue, Brooklyn

Brooklyn Botanic Garden is inviting children to become friends with trees. Why? Because they're helpful friends to us. The garden's latest exhibition, "Power of Trees," focuses on 52 varieties, emphasizing how they're bulwarks against climate change. Trees protect against flooding and erosion, and each can annually absorb up to 48 pounds of carbon dioxide.

The exhibition, which also comprises six-themed installations by New York City artists, offers special components in the children's Discovery Garden. Young visitors will find information panels, field guides, a game about fruit, a dendrometer (a device measuring the diameter of tree trunks) and thermometers that show shade's cooling effects.

But the most beguiling highlight may be the self-guided "To Change a Planet" story walk, running through Nov. 17. It consists of a trail with posted signs, each a colorful page from Christina Soontornvat's picture book "To Change a Planet," illustrated by Rahele Jomepour Bell. The narrative, which can be read while strolling, demonstrates that just as accumulated small acts can damage the environment, aggregated individual steps can help heal it.

All displays are included in garden admission, which starts at $12 and is free for children under 12. *LAUREL GRAEBER*

MICHAEL STEWART/BROOKLYN BOTANIC GARDEN

The Brooklyn Botanic Garden's exhibition "Power of Trees."

5

POP & ROCK
LIL YACHTY

Sept. 22 at Rumsey Playfield, Fifth Avenue and 69th Street, Manhattan

Like many performers of the modern era, Lil Yachty (below) has sometimes seen his music eclipsed by his persona. Casual listeners may know the Atlanta rapper from his early hits, buoyant pop-trap trifles like 2016's "iSpy" and "1 Night." They may also remember the host of extra-musical activities that boosted his profile around that time — among them, modeling for Yeezy, starring in a Target campaign, and riling up hip-hop's old heads.

But over the years, Yachty has doubled down on musical exploration, signaling his desire to be taken seriously. In 2021, he released "Michigan Boy Boat," an album-length study of one of the country's most vibrant rap scenes. Last year's one-off hit "Poland" highlighted his experimental streak without abandoning his playful sensibility. Most surprisingly, in January he released "Let's Start Here," a rap-to-rock pivot that takes notes from Pink Floyd, created with a cadre of indie producers. On Friday at 7 p.m., Yachty will bring his tour supporting "Let's Start Here" to Central Park for a benefit concert produced by SummerStage. Tickets start at $59.50 on Ticketmaster. *OLIVIA HORN*

This weekend I have . . .

BY MARGARET LYONS

. . . a half-hour, and I have played zip-zap-zop.

'GAME CHANGER' ON DROPOUT.TV OR YOUTUBE

DROPOUT

Sam Reich (right) hosts this happily offbeat panel game show. Three comedians buzz in with their answers, but the exact style of the game changes with each episode — instead of just trivia or whatever, formats include a wild version of Simon Says, off-the-cuff Power Point presentations, or a "Bachelor"-like contest. There are 50 episodes on Dropout.TV, which requires a subscription, and six available on YouTube to whet your appetite. If you've watched a lot of arena comedy specials recently, and you want something at the far other end of the spectrum, or if you've had more than one discussion about whether longform improv could ever be effective on television, watch this.

. . . an hour, and I sure like swords.

'KNIGHT FIGHT' ON DISCOVERY+

TIMOTHY O'CONNELL/HISTORY CHANNEL

The sole season of this 2019 combat competition series has made its clangy way to streaming. In each episode, participants don armor, grab swords, axes and other historical weapons, and then beat the living chivalry out of each other. Think mixed martial arts for LARPers, or perhaps LARPing for M.M.A. fighters. It's not gory — all the weapons are blunted, and the rules prohibit "stabbing strikes" — but it is chaotic, especially for those of us much more accustomed to seeing medieval weaponry unleashed only in chi-chi choreographed fight scenes and not in comparatively low-rent real-life beat-downs. If you ever dreamed of combining Medieval Times and backyard wrestling, this is for you.

. . . an hour, and I want something substantial.

'DEADLOCKED: HOW AMERICA SHAPED THE SUPREME COURT' FRIDAY AT 8 P.M. ON SHOWTIME

SHOWTIME

This fascinating four-part documentary series, directed by Dawn Porter, traces the occasionally edifying, sometimes exasperating history of the Supreme Court. Episode 1 goes back to the Warren Court of the 1950s and the jurisprudence of Thurgood Marshall (above left, with Lyndon B. Johnson); Episode 2 starts with the election of Richard Nixon, Episode 3 with the Clinton presidency and Episode 4 with the Trump campaign. "Deadlocked" uses an impressive depth of archival materials and thoughtful talking-head interviews to sketch a fraught portrait — a necessary corrective to the more mythologized, less thorough common Supreme Court histories.

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JESSE GREEN | THEATER REVIEW

Grief Comes Out at Night, And Tears Often Follow

CONTINUED FROM PAGE C1

Tony awards for his no-nonsense, full-sized approach, in which acting is the side effect of his insight and inhabitation of character. What's surprising, and a bit scary, is that he has played such a variety of men so vividly: a vile journalist, a penitent philanderer, a conniving cross-dresser. How many feelings does he have inside him?

And how many ways of turning them off? As soon as George's wife, Em, arrives, the tears and all other signs of vulnerability get ruthlessly shut down. George is so ornery and curt that even after 50 years or so of marriage, Em (Karen Allen) must dance around him in search of some opening to his secret grief. Emotional intelligence has turned her into a spelunker.

If you do not know such pairs from real life, you probably know them from the theater. "On Golden Pond" and "The Gin Game" both offer variations on the "crusty old man bickering with woman who knows better" template. Also like "Lunar Eclipse," those plays try to corral their rambling contents within the bounds of a thematic fence: the months of a summer, the deals of a deck.

Even more heavy-handedly, "Lunar Eclipse" uses the phases of planetary alignment as both plot and poetics. Its seven scenes (followed by a coda) are called "stages" and are described in pedantic voice-overs: "Stage 1. Moon enters penumbra. Penumbral shadow appears."

The framing adds nothing, in fact detracting from a story that could stand to be tighter and better grounded in reality. Margulies, so expert with urbane, artistic and moneyed characters — he won a Pulitzer Prize for "Dinner With Friends" and was a finalist for "Sight Unseen" and "Collected Stories" — is not as convincing with farm folk. ("Wild Turkey does a mighty fine job keeping you warm," George says as if he were on "Hee Haw.") I had to nod in agreement when I read a program note admitting that "astronomical liberties have been taken for dramatic purposes."

Astronomical in both senses. Yet despite the liberties, "Lunar Eclipse" remains affecting when its staging, by James Warwick, gets granular. In the middle of the night on which it takes place, George has come to a "sacred" spot on his farm (the needlessly rotating set is by John Musall) to watch the earth's shadow eat up the moon. Em has followed him there with "provisions": blankets he does not want and hot chocolate he reluctantly accepts only when she pours it into his tin cup of bourbon. She carefully applies bug spray to the neatly turned cuffs of her jeans (costumes by Christina Beam); he swats insects from his face throughout (crickets by the sound designer Nathan Leigh).

Lunar Eclipse
Through Oct. 22 at Shakespeare & Company in Lenox, Mass.; shakespeare.org. Running time: 1 hour 30 minutes.

These concrete details operate in helpful contrast to the back story revealed at regular intervals as the eclipse progresses over the next 90 minutes. We learn of beloved dogs buried nearby. Of a troubled sore-spot of a son. And of a new fear: that the early signs of dementia are beginning to cloud George's mind.

That the night is likewise too cloudy for a perfect viewing seems apt. (The very dim lighting is by James McNamara.) We see pretty well into George by observing his resistances, but Em, despite Allen's astute performance, is underwritten and mostly reactive. Her one expressed grief, about a tragedy now years in the past, cannot stand up to George's million pesky, present annoyances.

Perhaps that's Margulies's point — and a way of making meaning of the eclipse, which otherwise seems like a McGuffin. "This may come as a shock to you," George says with his usual asperity. "Even though we've been married forever, we're two separate people."

In other words: We cannot know each other. Marriage, even if not loveless, is not equal. As with planets and moons, one spouse generally revolves around the other, doing more work and yet, come crunchtime, left in the obliterating shadow.

MAGGIE HALL

Reed Birney and Karen Allen in "Lunar Eclipse," which opened at Shakespeare & Company.

LAURA COLLINS-HUGHES | THEATER REVIEW

SARA KRULWICH/THE NEW YORK TIMES

From left, Jeffrey Bean, Andrea Syglowski and Greg Keller in "Dig" at 59E59 Theaters, written and directed by Theresa Rebeck.

Green Thumbs, Tortured Souls

The writer and director Theresa Rebeck explores the truth as well as warped perceptions of it.

Dig (CRITIC'S PICK)
Through Oct. 22 at 59E59 Theaters in Manhattan; 59e59.org. Running time: 2 hours.

AMID THE THRIVING greenery of an indie plant shop called Dig, two living organisms are only tenuously clinging to survival.

One is a neglected wreck of withering vegetation brought in for emergency care. The other is a woman huddled in the corner, her hood up to block out the world. She's here with her father, Lou, who nearly killed that plant. But as he bickers amusingly with his old friend Roger, the kindly grump who owns the store, she is too bone-weary to engage.

Her name is Megan, and one of the worst misfortunes has blanketed her in grief: the death of her little boy in a notorious accident, which the whole country knows was all her fault. Total strangers despise her for it, yet no one is blaming Megan more mercilessly than she is herself. After a suicide attempt, she is living with her father in the Ohio town where she grew up. So far, it isn't going great.

"I embarrass him," she tells Roger after Lou steps out. Pre-empting any argument to the contrary, she adds: "The truth is the truth and if you try to get around it, it will come after you and take you down."

The truth and poisonously warped perceptions of it are major themes in Theresa Rebeck's new play "Dig," at 59E59 Theaters, and we'll get to that. First let's pause to run down the list of off-putting subjects mentioned so far: death of a child, grief, suicide.

But this intelligent, compassionate, beautifully acted dramedy — directed by the playwright for Primary Stages — is not a downer. Rebeck has spiked her script with comedy, and enlisted a cast as nimble with laugh lines as with prickliness and pain.

As Megan, Andrea Syglowski has a coiled, almost feral rage that snaps its tight leash more than once. Just watch her go after Molly (Mary Bacon), a customer who has been trying to figure out why Megan looks so familiar. When the penny drops, Megan turns on her with a scorching intensity.

Alongside mourning and self-reproach, repentance is a motif in Megan's life; she is forever apologizing. But humor can coexist with that, and in this hope-filled, distinctly non-Pollyanna-ish play, she is very funny.

Swiftly feeling more comfortable at Dig than in her father's house — Roger (Jeffrey Bean), an absolute geek for plants, has a nurturing vibe — she finagles her way into an unpaid job there, and flourishes a bit. (The set is by Christopher and Justin Swader.) Everett (Greg Keller), the stoner who is the only other employee, sees her as a rival for Roger's esteem. And Megan nearly worships Roger, which Everett does not get.

"No offense, but you're like a larva," she says. "You know, you're like something that's not even a bug yet. So I don't actually expect you to understand."

One of the judgiest gossips in town, Everett cloaks aggressive cruelty in the guise of honesty. But he has Keller's charisma and comic chops, so the audience loves him. In an Act II scene between Megan and Everett, he is faced with a choice so morally appalling that a bad decision could change everything we've thought about him. I have never felt an audience silently will a character to do the right thing the way it did in that moment.

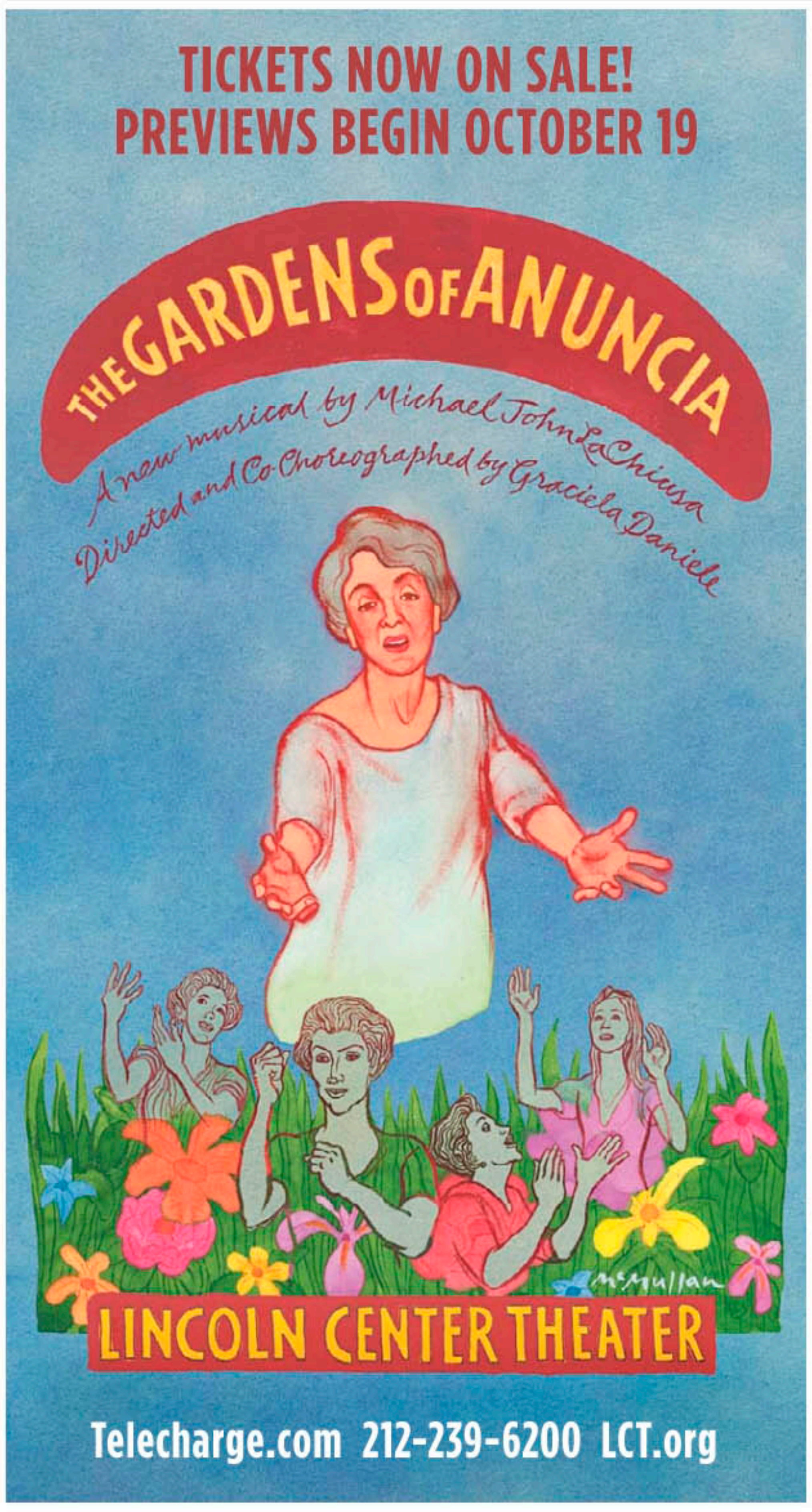
Hypocrisy and sexist double standards are fundamental to what Rebeck is contemplating in "Dig," as feminist a play as any of her others. She is examining not just parental guilt — Lou (Triney Sandoval) feels this, too, about Megan — but also deeply ingrained notions about the sanctity of motherhood in particular, and the censoriousness that failing at it brings.

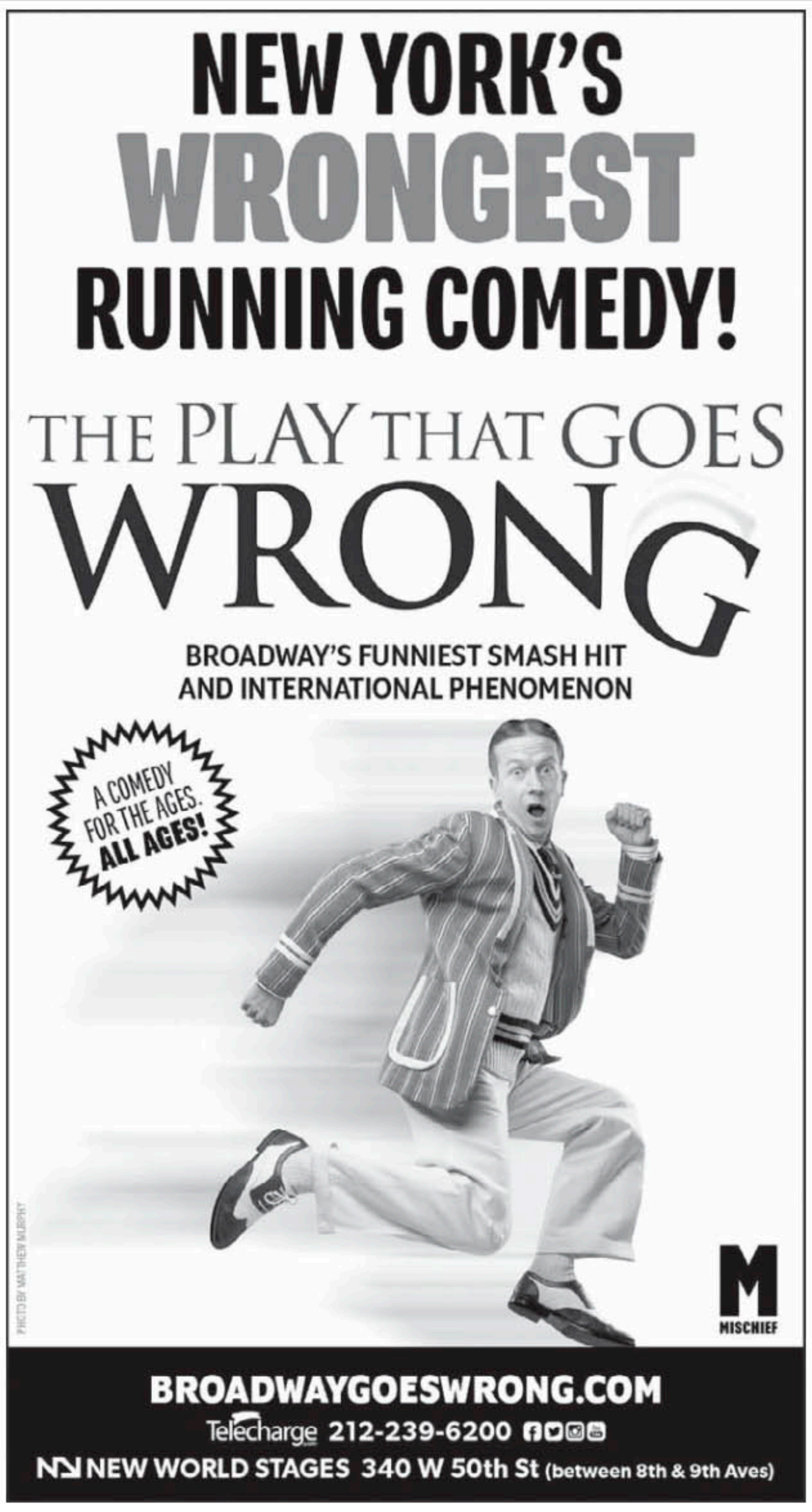
Everett and the many others eager to condemn Megan think they know the truth about her son's death. Even Lou holds her responsible, but he ought to listen to himself.

"She was always a screw-up," he tells Roger, "but never in a million years would anyone have believed that she could do something so grotesque."

Did she, though? Megan has taken the blame, heaped it on herself. She believes to her core that she deserves it.

She confessed to the police. And no one dug any further: It is the mother's fault.





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Stripped-Down Style And a Full Dance Card

The American choreographer Trajal Harrell has shows all year, with a Paris retrospective.

By LAURA CAPPELLE

GENEVA — The American choreographer Trajal Harrell has a rule. Though he lives between Switzerland and Greece, he tries to make it home to Douglas, Ga., to visit his mother every three months.

Not this summer, however. "I really had to decompress," Harrell said recently in Geneva, where he had just resumed touring with his company, the Schauspielhaus Zurich Dance Ensemble.

Call it the price of success: His schedule for 2023 lists 46 engagements across Europe and the United States. In July, Harrell took on France's biggest stage, the open-air Cour d'Honneur of the Avignon Festival. A debut at the Brooklyn Academy of Music will follow in November, with his 2021 work "The Köln Concert," set to Keith Jarrett's landmark 1975 performance and a selection of Joni Mitchell songs.

And in the meantime, the Festival d'Automne à Paris, a prestigious multidisciplinary event, is presenting a monthslong "Portrait" spanning nine works, opening on Friday.

Harrell appears onstage in all of these productions. The Paris retrospective showcases his ability to deconstruct existing styles and mold them to his "imagination," a word he frequently returned to in an interview.

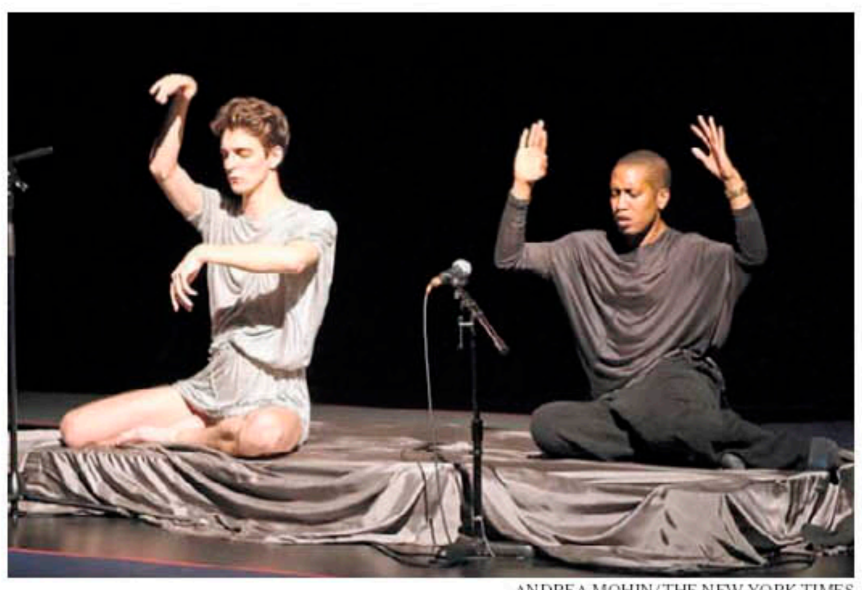
Unusually, this late starter — he turned to dance after graduating from Yale in the 1990s — has never taken formal classes in any of the techniques that have most influenced him, which include vogueing and Japanese Butoh. Instead, he observed them from the outside, and took from their "theoretical underpinnings," he said, rather than copying what he saw.

In his sprawling breakout project, "Twenty Looks or Paris Is Burning at the Judson Church," initiated in 2009, he dreamed up a choreographic encounter between the postmodern choreographers who worked at Judson Dance Theater, in the 1960s, and the Harlem vogueing ball scene.

Since then, Harrell has refined a stripped-down approach to movement, featuring the signature tiptoeing he derived from runway walks. "He has a minimalist approach that is so deep in references," said Maria Ferreira Silva, a dancer at the Schauspielhaus Zurich. Yet she was also drawn to his warmth, she added. "He just goes full-hearted onstage, and he brings everyone along."

KARLA HIRALDO VOLEAU FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

CHRISTOPHE RAYNAUD DE LAGE



ANDREA MOHIN/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Clockwise from top: Trajal Harrell in Geneva; Harrell, right, and Thibault Lac in "Twenty Looks or Paris Is Burning at the Judson Church," Harrell's breakout project, in New York in 2012; Harrell performing "The Romeo" in July at the Avignon Festival in France.

Harrell's imagination was shaped, he said, by his "very idyllic Southern upbringing" in Douglas, as part of a well-to-do Black family. "My grandfather was the patriarch of the town," Harrell said. "He came of age in the '50s, and managed to buy land. There was a certain kind of poetry to language, to eating, to being. My grandparents were always using metaphors, like: 'There's more than one way to skin a cat.'"

Harrell was academically gifted, and his college-educated parents pushed him to be ambitious. A self-described "drama kid," he considered a career in acting, but after being introduced to the Six Viewpoints, a movement-based theater practice in college, he said, "I came back to my body, and all of a sudden, I just wanted to move."

"I didn't want to speak anymore," he added.

After years as a freelance choreographer, in 2019, Harrell was invited to form a permanent dance company at the Schauspielhaus Zurich, one of the German-speaking world's most high-profile theaters. It allowed him to work on a more ambitious scale, and with a full-time group of dancers: "It was a turning point where we began to share a movement style, a philosophy of movement," he said.

His next production, "Tambourines," will be loosely inspired by Nathaniel Hawthorne's 1850 novel "The Scarlet Letter." "I've been thinking about how to reclaim this idea of the fallen woman," said Harrell, who studied with the feminist thinker bell hooks at Yale. "What if there had been like a community of people to support her?"

Yet this new work, and the Festival d'Automne's "Portrait," come as Harrell faces unexpected change. Last winter, the city of Zurich declined to renew the contract of the duo of artistic directors that brought Harrell to Switzerland, Benjamin von Blomberg and Nicolas Stemann. When they leave in 2024, the Schauspielhaus Zurich Dance Ensemble will fold.

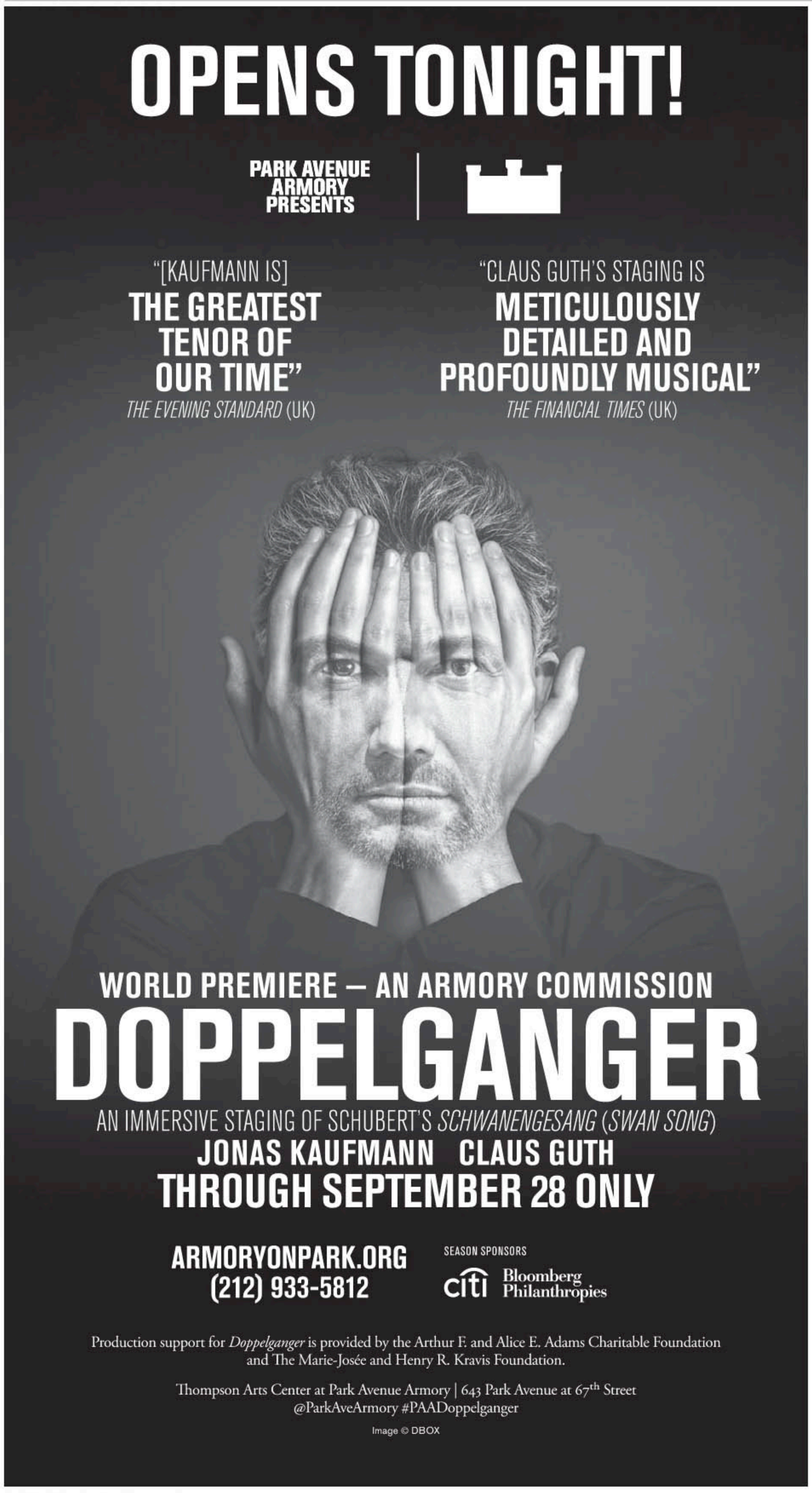
"We will leave, but there are still some talks to go," Harrell said. "We don't know what's going to happen to the repertoire."

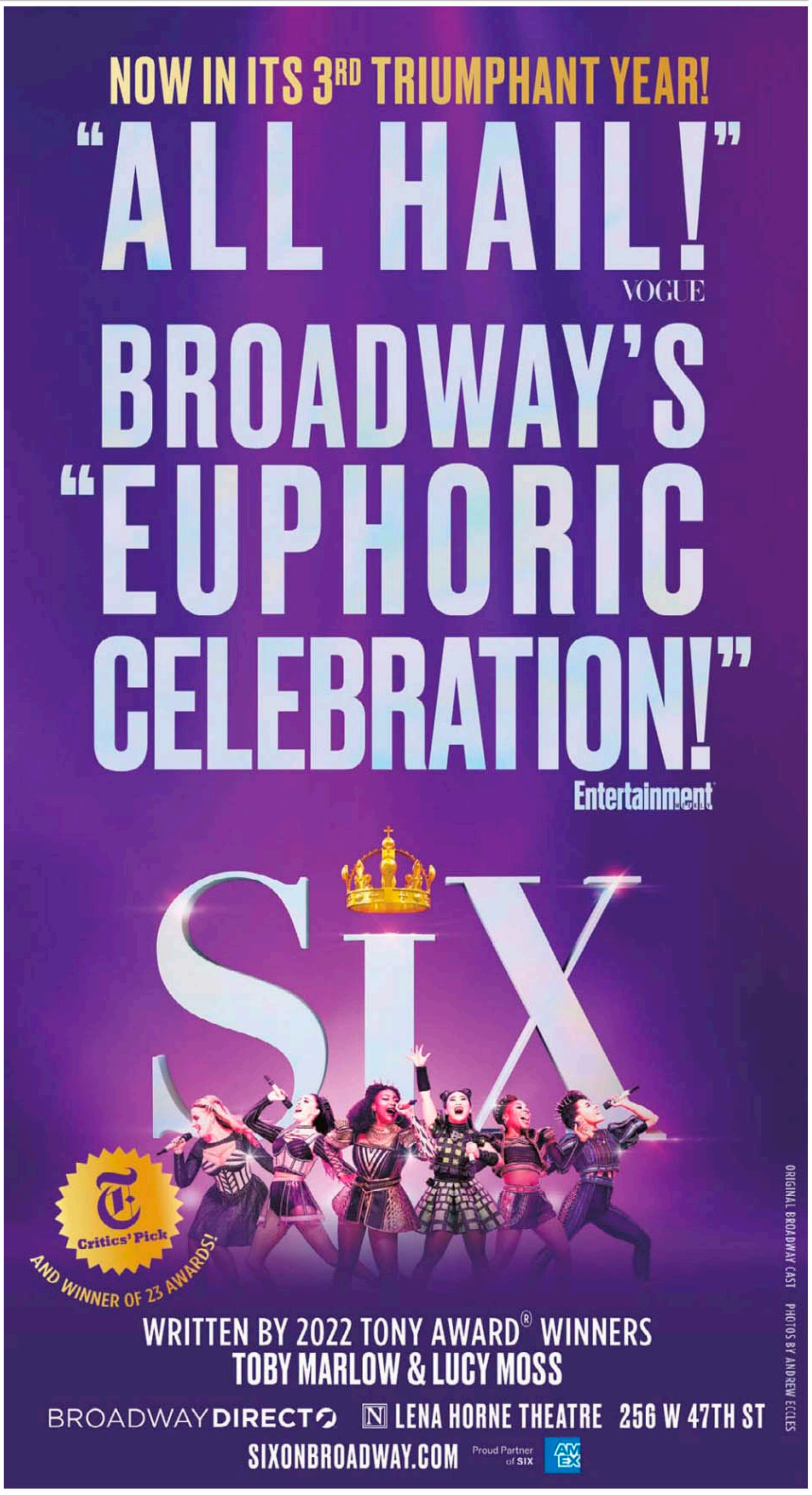
He was philosophical about moving on from such a demanding schedule. "You get a lot from it, but after a while, for me, the cost is too high; I need more freedom," he said, adding that he hoped to keep working with a company in Zurich.

And he is also making plans for a future away from the dance world. "I want a second act," he said. "I love what I do, but it's a very specific lifestyle. I have an inkling of how many more years I can do — but certainly not for the rest of my life."

He was already considering a master's degree in disability studies, he said, inspired by growing up with a sister who had cerebral palsy. "And I really, really want more time with my family and my loved ones."

"I love making art," he said before heading out to warm up for a performance. "But, you know, it's not the most important thing in the world."



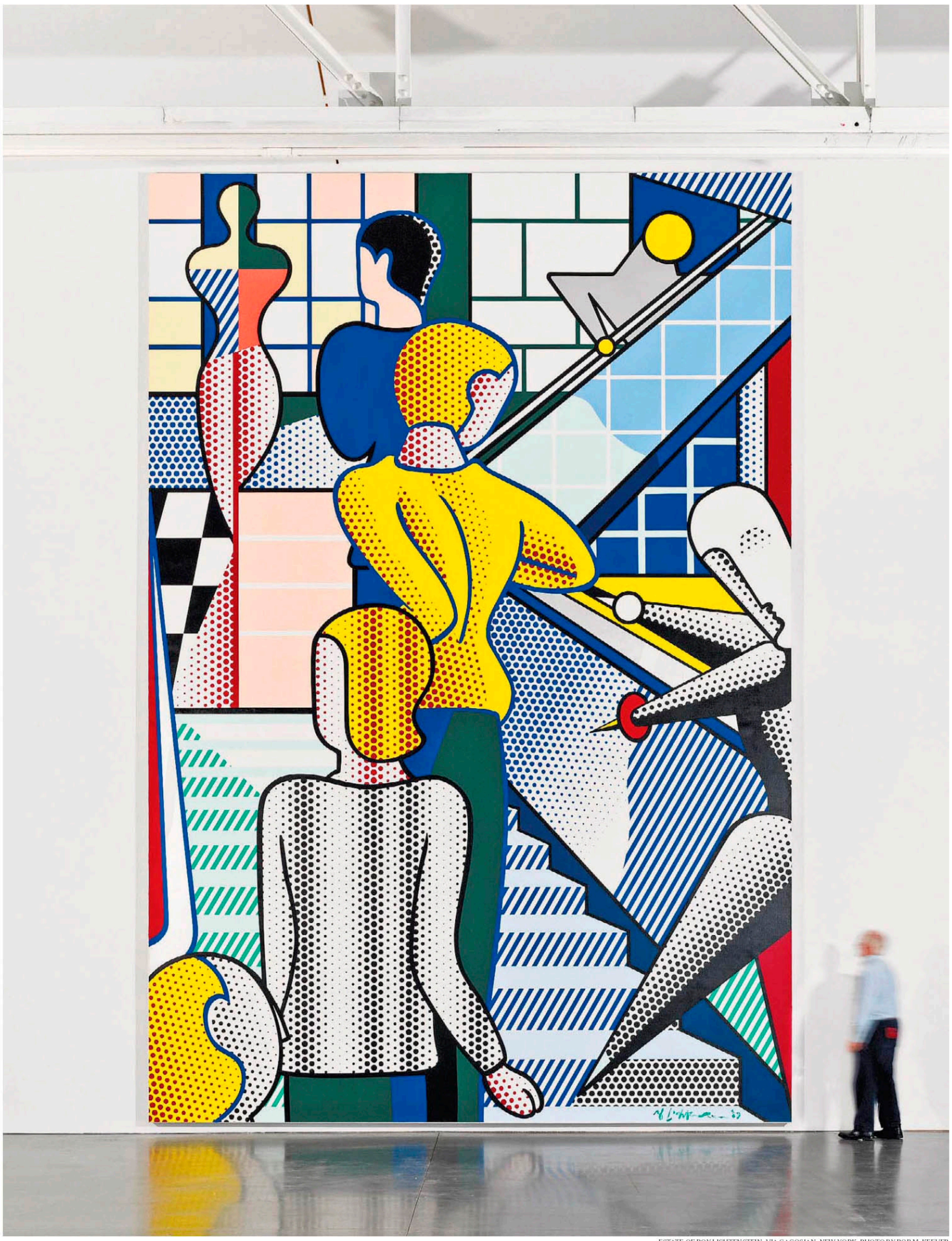


Fine Art

DEBORAH SOLOMON | CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK

In the Age of 'Athleisure,' No Room for Pop

A giant painting made in 1989 for a Beverly Hills building was rejected by its new tenant.



ESTATE OF ROY LICHTENSTEIN, VIA GAGOSIAN, NEW YORK; PHOTO BY ROB McKEEVER

WITH THE 100TH BIRTHDAY of Roy Lichtenstein approaching on Oct. 27, can we please turn our attention to the meaning of the word "forever?" Art is long and life is short, the maxim goes, but now even the new Lichtenstein stamps issued by the U.S. Postal Service for the artist's centennial come with the promise of "Forever." Conversely, one of the artist's best-known works, the jumbo-size "Bauhaus Stairway Mural: The Large Version," has been removed from its supposedly permanent digs in Beverly Hills.

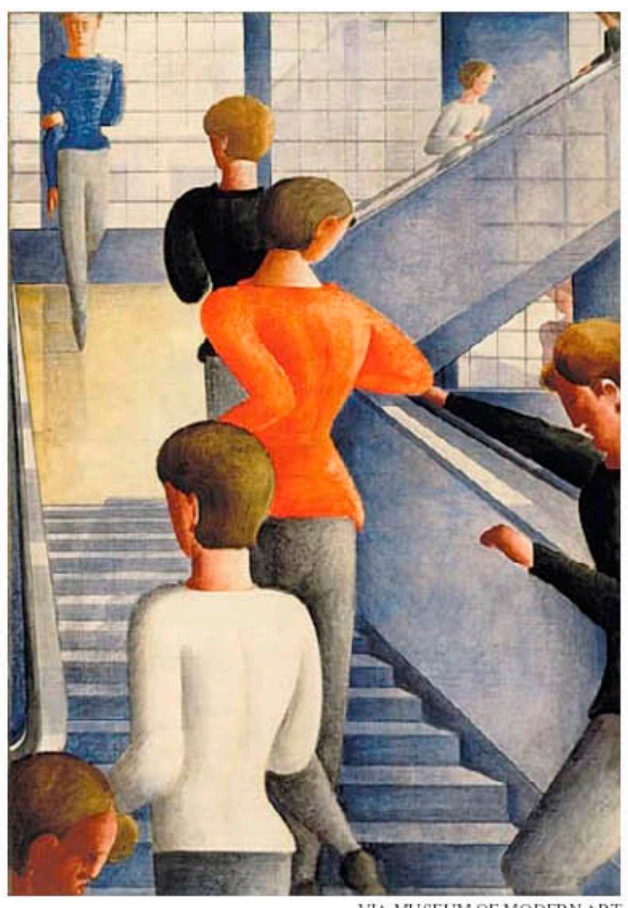
"Bauhaus Stairway Mural," a marvelously witty and lucid painting that stands about 26 feet tall and 18 feet wide, was initially commissioned for the skylit atrium of the landmark I.M. Pei building that housed Creative Artists Agency. That was in 1989. The artist was then 66 years old and celebrated for a style of painting that derived a surprising charisma from the anonymity of dot-pattern commercial printing. He favored primary colors and blunt, industrial-strength outlines whose legibility was well-suited for the demands of mural-size art.

The mural is now making its first appearance in New York, at the West 24th Street outpost of the Gagosian Gallery. It was flown in as part of the observance of the artist's centennial, which will culminate with a full-dress retrospective at the Whitney Museum in 2026. In the meantime, it is wonderful having the mural in Manhattan, although the current exhibition (up through Dec. 22) feels somewhat contextless and even mysterious. It does not include any preparatory sketches for the mural or archival photographs of its installation — and we do not learn why it left California.

For that I had to call around. I learned that the mural is owned by Michael Ovitz, a co-founder and former chairman of CAA and a leading collector of contemporary art. "A new tenant came in and they didn't want it," Ovitz said when we talked by phone, referring to the work that Lichtenstein painted *in situ* over a period of five weeks. The tenant, which arrived in 2021, is Alo Yoga, a company specializing in leggings, cropped tops and other clothing designed for what it calls "mindful movement."

"I wasn't happy about it," Ovitz said, about having to put the mural in storage, "but there was nothing I could do."

Why would a company choose to reject a



VIA MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

work of art commissioned specifically for its building? When I posed the question to Alo, a spokesperson declined to comment.

The irony is that "Bauhaus Stairway Mural" might seem almost tailor-made for an activewear company. It shows four or five figures from the back, heading up a wide, industrial-style flight of stairs. Their bodies are well-toned and free of flab, and they are dressed in long-sleeved monochromatic tops that resemble the gender-neutral "athleisure" that has become a wardrobe staple.

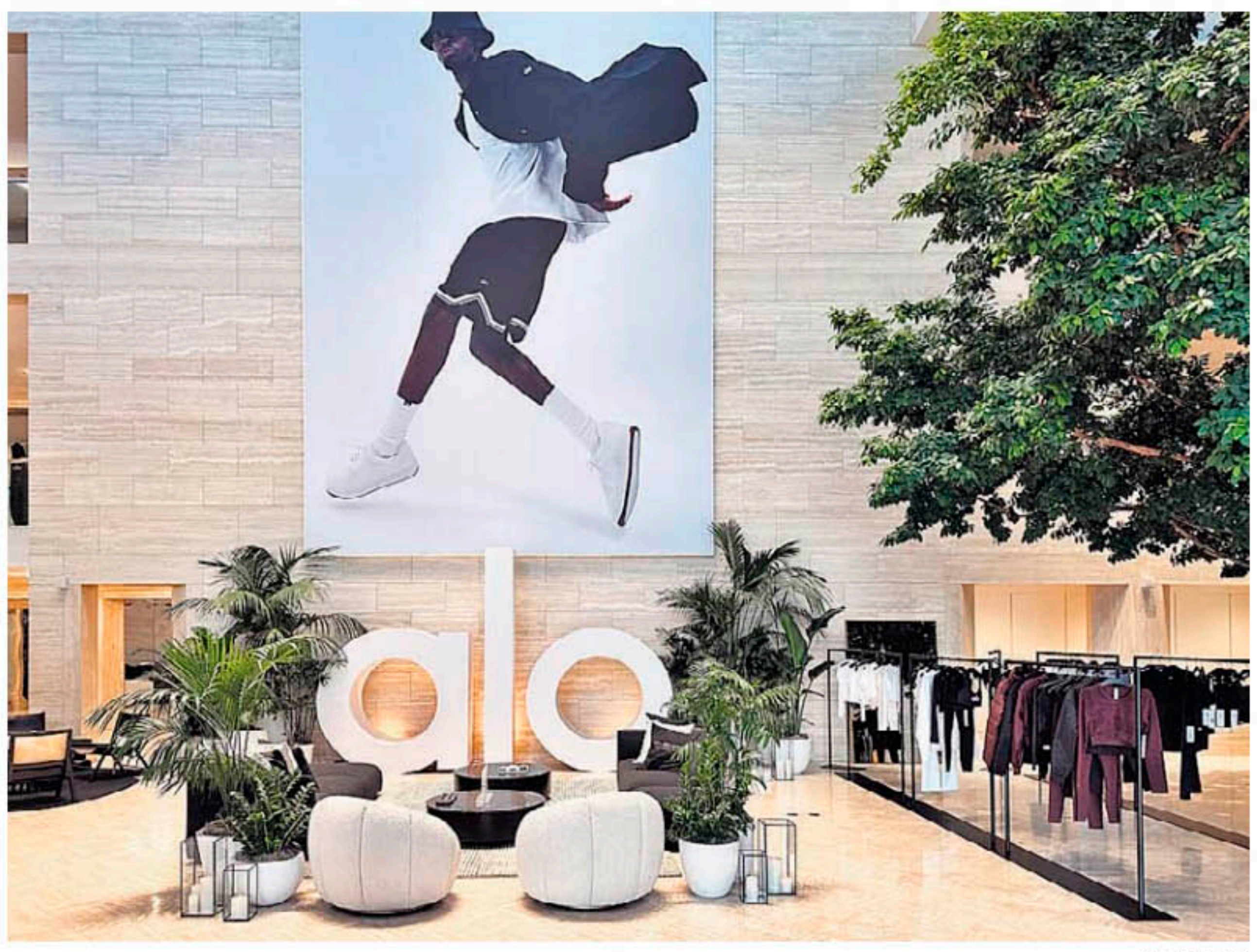
Lichtenstein, a pioneer of postmodern recycling, swiped the subject of his mural from a beloved masterpiece of German painting — Oskar Schlemmer's "Bauhaus Stairway," of 1932, which is owned by the Museum of Modern Art. The painting depicts an actual staircase at the Bauhaus, the progressive art school that opened in Weimar, Germany, in 1919, and exemplified the modern movement at its most extroverted and techno-friendly. Artists claimed a bond with designers and engineers and set out to repair the world.

You can feel some of that energy in the Schlemmer painting, whose figures give off a zigzagging rhythm. The central figure, a brunette in an orange top, has jutting elbows and a V-shaped waist. She is a new kind of woman, an angular, androgynous emissary from the Bauhaus's future-facing ranks.

In a nod to its subject matter, MoMA curators have traditionally hung the Schlemmer in a suitably bustling public stairwell. Museum visitors who walk rather than escalate up to the second floor are rewarded with the startling sight of a mirror image of their own movements.

And please note that the figures in the Schlemmer are walking *up* the staircase. Upward movement in art often hints at lofty belief, as in, say, Titian's "Assumption of the Virgin" or Barnett Newman's emphatically vertical "zips." Downward motion, by contrast, can evoke Dada irreverence and, in

Ethan Tate contributed reporting from Los Angeles.



ETHAN TATE

particular, Marcel Duchamp's "Nude Descending a Staircase," the Cubist painting that created a brouhaha at the Armory Show of 1913 because neither a nude nor the alleged staircase could be located in its welter of tilting planes.

It is not surprising that Lichtenstein was drawn to Schlemmer, who rejected the hot, romantic ethos of 20th-century German Expressionism in much the same way that Lichtenstein rejected the emotive ethos of Abstract Expressionism a half-century later. A native New Yorker who grew up on the Upper West Side, Lichtenstein remains one of our most influential artists. A founder of the Pop Art movement of the 1960s, he earned his first fame with pristine, hyper-elegant paintings of comic-book blondes and their Ken-like boyfriends, a wholesome pantheon compared with his fellow Pop artist Andy Warhol's vampiric portraits of celebrities.

One of Lichtenstein's enduring themes was the absurdity of utopian visions, and so the Schlemmer painting was perfect grist for his dot-pattern mill. Lichtenstein often seemed divided between admiration for his avant-garde predecessors and an opposing desire to parody their work. Revealingly, in lieu of the male dancer that Schlemmer has positioned in the upper left of his painting, balancing *en pointe,* Lichtenstein has substituted an Oscar statuette. He thereby flattened the radical lessons of the Bauhaus into a race for an Academy Award.

Although the Lichtenstein was commissioned for a specific site, the painting can be moved without losing any of its aesthetic wattage. "Bauhaus Stairway Mural" is not technically a mural, since it was not painted directly on a wall. Rather, it qualifies as a mural-size painting-on-canvas.

Above, Roy Lichtenstein's "Bauhaus Stairway Mural," commissioned in 1989 for the headquarters of Creative Artists Agency. Far left, Oskar Schlemmer's "Bauhaus Stairway," 1932, the painting that Lichtenstein reinterpreted. Left, the building's new tenant, Alo Yoga, removed the Lichtenstein and hung an advertisement for its clothing in its place.

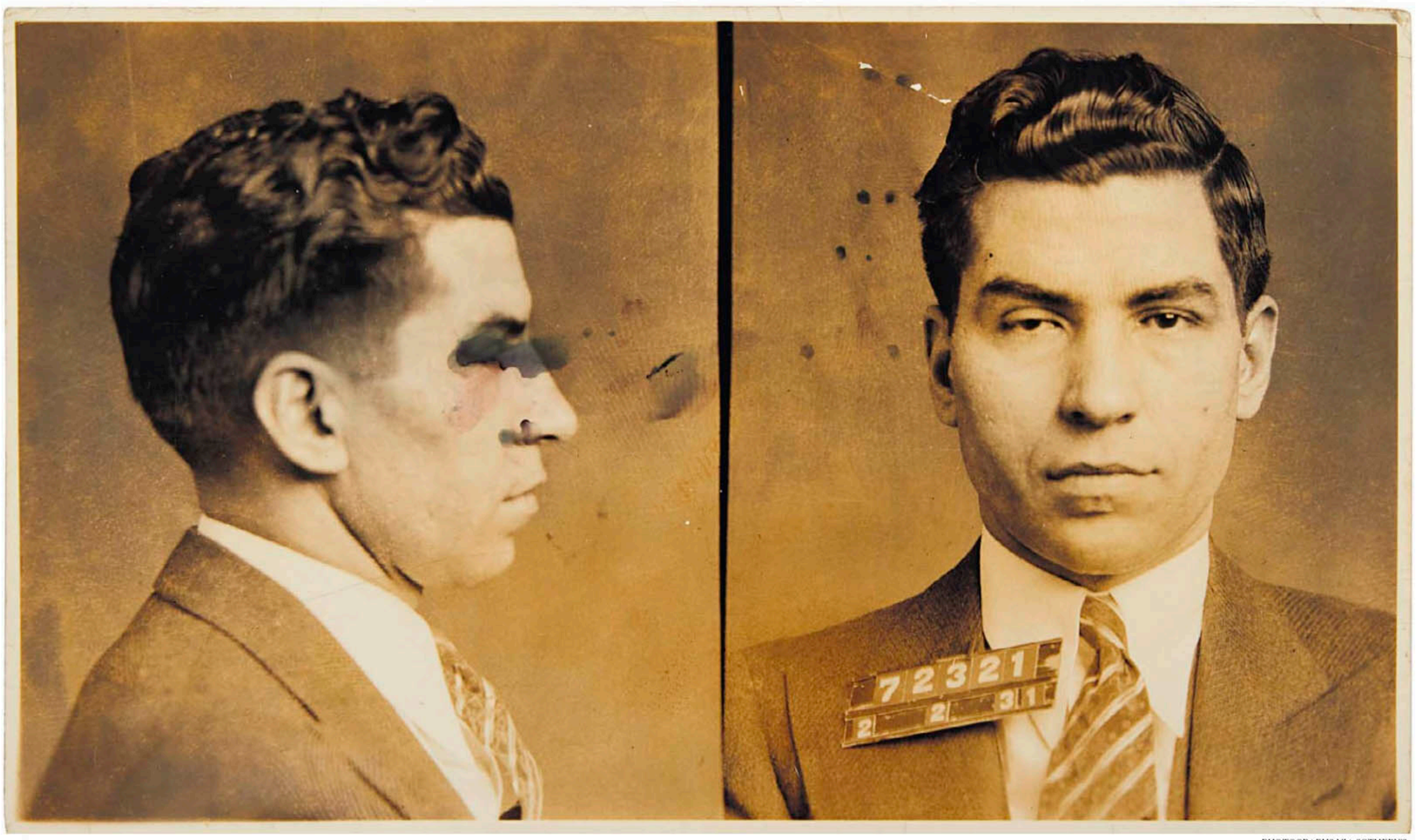
Roy Lichtenstein: Bauhaus Stairway Mural
Through Dec. 22 at Gagosian Gallery, 555 West 24th Street, Manhattan; 212-741-1111, gagosian.com.

In this way it differs from countless murals whose displacement has basically destroyed them, such as Keith Haring's buoyant "Grace House Mural" (circa 1983), an 85-foot-long parade of radiant babies, barking dogs and other figures that once adorned the stairwell of a Manhattan youth center. When the center closed, the owner of the building removed the mural and sold it as 13 cutup fragments.

The Lichtenstein mural, which is not for sale, is in no danger of ending up in a chop shop. But it does leave one a bit queasy to think about the photograph that has replaced it in the atrium of the former CAA building on Wilshire. Where the Lichtenstein once hung, an advertisement for Alo products was spotted in mid-September. The ad shows a male model clad from head to toe in clothing emblazoned with the Alo logo. Despite the company's yoga theme, the model's pose is less downward-facing dog than "Winged Victory of Samothrace," his lightweight jacket fluttering in the simulated breeze behind him.

By what calculus would a company choose to furnish their quarters with a poster of a guy modeling a windbreaker rather than a museum-quality painting by Lichtenstein? Granted, companies need to promote their brands. But a generation ago, corporations turned to art to burnish their reputations and acquire a patina of class. Art sponsorship was seen as good business, a mark of prestige, a win-win, not something that took up too much space in the lobby or was too elitist to appeal to customers.

It is proof, not that we need any, that art is the opposite of branding. Branding seeks to deliver a product to the widest possible audience, while art is about one person alone in a room, trying to give physical form to the invisible matter of their inner lives — or in Lichtenstein's case, wondering if he had an interior life in the first place. As he once said, "I don't have any big anxieties. I wish I did. I'd be much more interesting."



PHOTOGRAPHS VIA SOTHEBY'S

A 1931 mug shot of the mobster Charles Luciano, a.k.a. Lucky, which is part of Pier 24's first sale of vernacular photography, online from Tuesday through Oct. 3. Center, a cyanotype of a pitcher clutching a baseball, and a tintype of a child with hand-applied pigment, circa 1900. Bottom, a silver gelatin print of San Francisco after the 1906 earthquake.

Sotheby's Sale of Mug Shots and Other Images

An eclectic collection from Pier 24 Photography includes vintage portraits of ballplayers.

By ARTHUR LUBOW

Pier 24 Photography made its debut in 2010 on the San Francisco waterfront, the creation of a former investment banker, Andrew Pilara. Since then, the exhibition space has staged highly regarded photography shows, mostly drawn from the founder's wide-ranging collection.

But early this year, unhappy that the San Francisco Port Commission had tripled the rent, Pilara, 81, announced that Pier 24 will close in July 2025. While he will give the majority of its holdings to museums, a sizable portion will be sold to support medical research, education and the arts, through a foundation that he and his wife, Mary Pilara, oversee.

Although the collection is known for its in-depth representation of prominent artists, a significant part of Pilara's collection was created by anonymous photographers. Sotheby's will offer up many of these images that Christopher McCall, the Pier 24 director, culled from eBay, flea markets and auctions in the organization's first sale of vernacular photography, online from Tuesday through Oct. 3.

The photographers' aim were functional, not artistic. About a third of the lots are made up of police mug shots, a genre that Pilara embraced early. "When I saw mug shots, I said, 'They are sitting for a portrait,'" he recalled in a video interview. And, because they sparked an emotional response, they met his essential criterion of whether to buy.

"About Face," an exhibition of portraits at Pier 24 in 2012-13, presented a roomful of more than 300 mug shots, as well as photographs by renowned artists, including August Sander, Richard Avedon and Cindy Sherman. "It was very popular," Pilara said of the mug shot room. While most of the pictures were arrayed in multiples, along the lines of the typological arrangements of Bernd and Hilla Becher (also represented in the Pier 24 collection), the celebrity mobster Charles Luciano, a.k.a. Lucky, merited a framed diptych of his own. (It is included in the auction.)

The Sotheby's sale also features shots of new prisoners at San Quentin in 1935 and grisly crime-scene photos in New York in the 1930s. But much of the selection is more wholesome. Pilara, a longtime baseball fan, acquired an archive of 364 retouched portraits of ballplayers that The Chicago Tribune relinquished as it entered the digital age. ("I was a pitcher," Pilara said. "Baseball has been my life, and I'd never seen press photos like that.") Aesthetically more impressive are a collodion print on iron (a kind of tintype) of Tug Arundel, a catcher who played for the Indianapolis Hoosiers in the 1880s, and a cyanotype of a pitcher's arm and hand gripping a baseball.

Also memorable are an assemblage of hand-colored, black-and-white portraits from northeastern Brazil and 40 American tintypes, mostly of children, many embellished with a paintbrush. In one memento, a delicately painted lace bib poignantly evokes the fragility of a baby. But who were the people behind the camera? An undated self-portrait of a practitioner, his camera on a tripod, provides a likeness if not a name.

Pilara particularly sought out scrapbooks with an insight into people's lives. A photo album kept in the early 20th century by a young woman, Mildred Elizabeth Wheatley, documents her progression from infancy to marriage.

More unexpected is a large collection of photo identification badges, worn by workers entering factories in the 1940s. On the surface, nothing could be less emotionally moving, yet for Pilara, they resonate. "My wife of 40 years is from a small town of 900 in Illinois," he explained. She would tell him about the manufacturing plants in her birthplace, and the jobs they provided, that had been lost to other countries, especially China. "I'm an investor," he said. "That really put it on the wall for me."

He has amassed pictures of the San Francisco earthquake and fire of 1906 for similar reasons: He was born and raised in the city. A grouping of 20 snapshots of the catastrophe included in the auction were most likely taken by an amateur wandering through the city with one of the inexpensive Kodak cameras that were all the rage at the turn of the century.

Glenstone Museum in Maryland (endowed by Emily and Mitchell Rales) purchased 112 photographs from the Pier 24 collection in March, zeroing in on big names like Diane Arbus, Walker Evans, William Eggleston and Rineke Dijkstra. A May sale at Sotheby's also focused on well-known artists, including Dorothea Lange and Robert Adams, netting close to $11 million.

But more vernacular and less pricey images cast a light on one of photography's primary purposes — documentation. They are represented here in its myriad forms: supervision, publicity, remembrance. Whether artistically distinguished or not, the pictures remind you of the passage of time and the inevitability of extinction. They make you think, mourn and dream.

BARKLEY L. HENDRICKS
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Barkley L. Hendricks (American, 1945–2017), *Lawdy Mama*, 1969. Oil and gold leaf on canvas, 53 3/4 × 36 1/4 in. (136.5 × 92.1 cm). Studio Museum in Harlem, gift of Stuart Liebman, in memory of Joseph B. Liebman. © Barkley L. Hendricks, courtesy of the Estate of Barkley L. Hendricks and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

HOLLAND COTTER | ART REVIEW

CRITIC'S PICK
Manet/Degas
Sunday through Jan. 7 at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in Manhattan; 212-535-7710, metmuseum.org.

Manet and Degas in a Pas de Deux at the Met

CONTINUED FROM PAGE C1
to know better, in half-light.

That said, the show's compare-and-contrast approach to two early modernist titans is fascinating and apt. Édouard Manet (1832-83) and Edgar Degas (1834-1917) were Paris natives, born into wealthy haute-bourgeois families. Both veered from familial expectations in becoming artists. Both abjured a conventional art training and invented the art we call modern day by day, year by year as they went.

Legendarily, they bumped into each other in the early 1860s while on separate, self-educational trips to the Louvre to study and sketch old art. They remained friends — and periodic frenemies — till the end of their lives.

It was a relationship that survived, possibly even thrived, on difference. On the political spectrum, Manet was socially progressive, Degas conservative, increasingly so. Yet when it came to career politics, the roles were reversed. Manet's ambition was to have his work shown and lauded at the annual Salon of the august École des Beaux-Arts, while Degas was instrumental in founding an alternative yearly showcase, the anti-establishment Impressionist exhibition (with Claude Monet, Camille Pissaro and Berthe Morisot), in which Manet refused to participate.

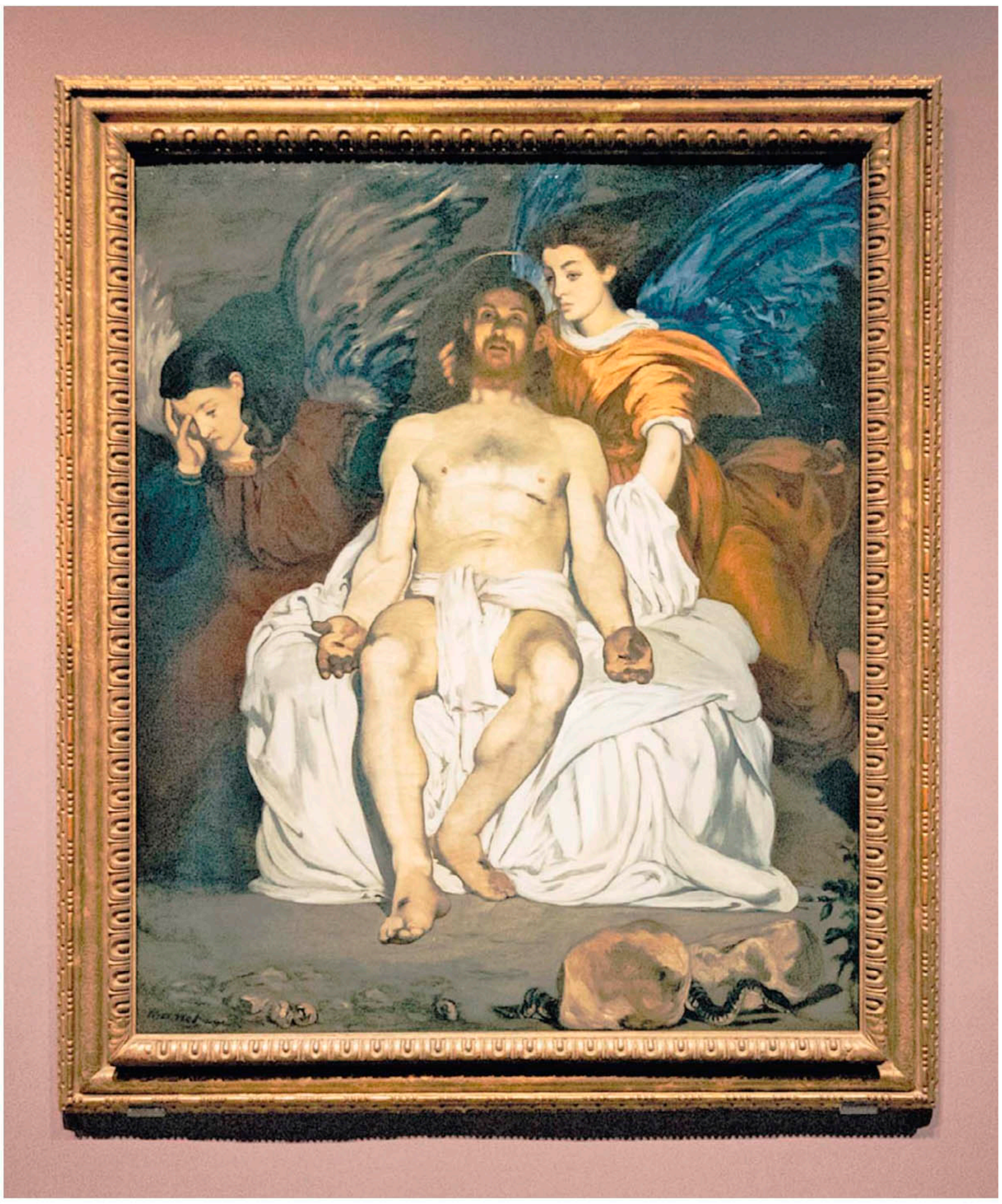
Their personalities were fundamentally unalike, in ways that could scratch like sandpaper. The Irish critic George Moore, who hung out with them in Paris, described them thus: "Manet loud, declaratory, and eager for medals and decorations; Degas sharp, deep, more profound, scornfully sarcastic."

Put simplistically, the dynamic was extrovert versus introvert. You might even glean this from the two self-portraits that open the show. In Manet's, dated around 1878, the artist stands alert, eager-eyed, paintbrush poised. Dressed in a sporty beige jacket and hat, he's ready to wrap up this quick-job self-sketch and join you for a talk and drink.

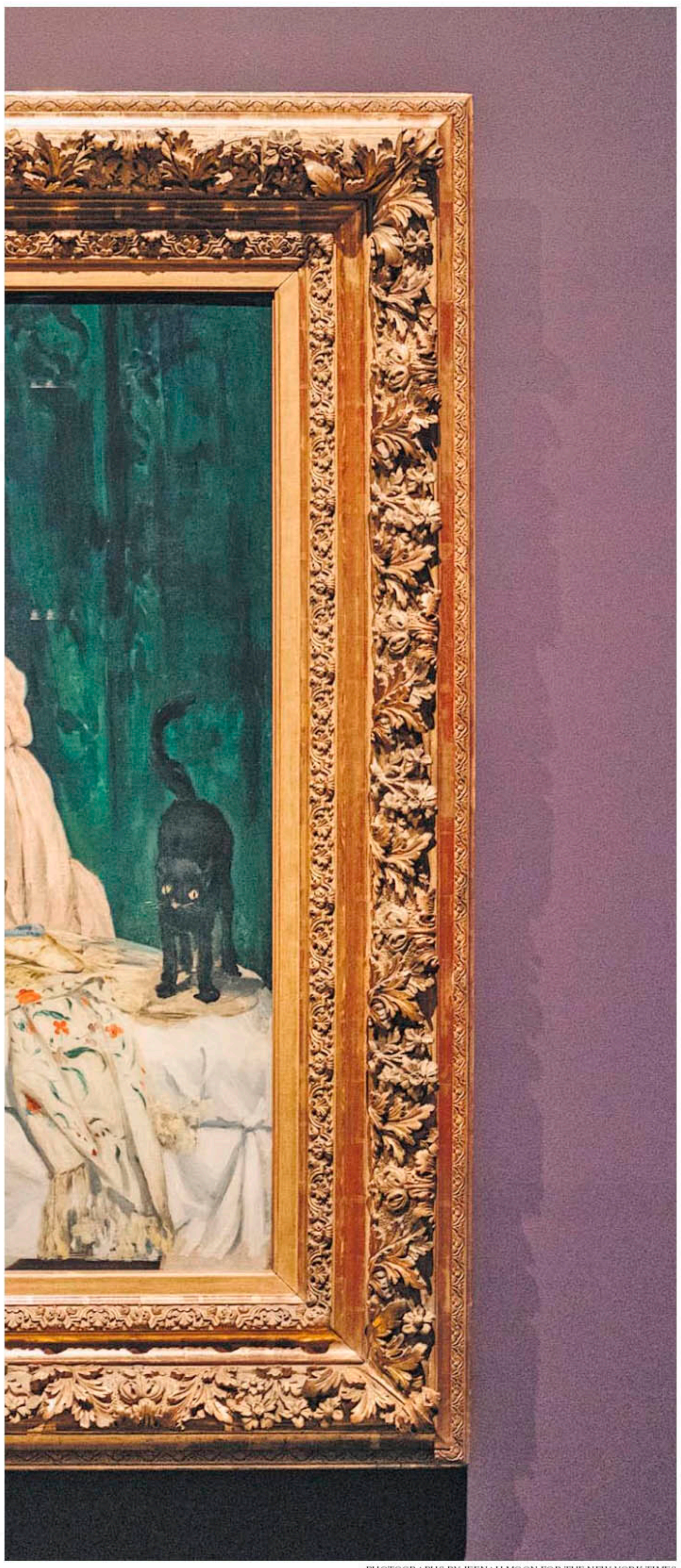
By contrast, in a high-polish painting from almost 20 years earlier, a somber-suited, sideways-looking Degas sits and sulks and pouts and keeps his distance. He, too, holds a brush, or maybe a pen, but it's half-hidden, as if he didn't want to advertise his labor. Withholding and appraising is the vibe.

Beyond this introductory meet-and-greet, the show takes the form of a labyrinthine sequence of thematic sections — the plum-colored, vista-rich design is by Joachim Hackl, complemented by the graphics of Frank Mondragon — which traces the path of two careers shaped by shared influences and tensions.

Tension is in the air in the first section, titled "An Enigmatic Relationship." Here we find more than half a dozen portraits — drawn, etched, painted — of Manet by Degas, but not even one of Degas by Manet. Hmm. And Degas's painted portrait of his



Above left: self-portraits by Édouard Manet, top, and Edgar Degas, the starring couple of the new Metropolitan Museum of Art's exhibition. Above, "The Dead Christ With Angels," 1864–68, by Manet. Above right, "Interior," 1868–69, by Degas. Far right, "The Execution of Maximilian," 1867–68, by Manet. The painting was cut up into pieces after Manet's death, but the fragments were saved by Degas and later partly restored.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY JEENAH MOON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

From the Metropolitan Museum of Art's "Manet/Degas" exhibition, clockwise from far left: "Olympia," 1863-65, by Édouard Manet; "The Dead Toreador," probably 1864, by Manet; and "Scene from the Steeplechase: The Fallen Jockey," 1866, reworked 1880–81 and circa 1897, by Edgar Degas.

VIA PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART

colleague has been curiously altered, edited. It was originally a double portrait of Manet and his wife, Suzanne Leenhoff, a talented pianist. But Manet so hated Degas's depiction of Suzanne that he impulsively razored it out. Degas, furious, stalked off with the picture, which he had intended as a gift.

Then we're back in the artists' journeyman years, when they were prowling the Louvre, and galleries and churches in Florence and Rome, channeling art history, looking at and absorbing many of the same things. We see, for example, an early drawing by Degas of a nude mythological figure by Raphael. A decade later, the same image serves as a model for the picnicking nude woman in Manet's corner-turning "Dejeuner Sur l'Herbe."

"Dejeuner" — represented in the show by a Manet oil study — is often cited as an opening volley in the revolution called modern art. But it was a mere anticipatory rumble to the detonation that soon followed in the picture called "Olympia" (1863-65), here on first-time loan from the Orsay to the United States.

Its image of a Paris courtesan, with tungsten-white skin and a level gaze, stretched out on her bed and approached by a Black female attendant bearing flowers, punched many a hot button — social, aesthetic and ethical — in French bourgeois culture. (A catalog essay by the Met curator at large Denise Murrell is a must-read on this.) Surrounded by some of Manet's other in-your-face radical pictures from the same time, it turns the gallery into a kind of atomic reactor, blasting out complex energy in all directions.

Modern means secular only? Manet's "Dead Christ With Angels" (1864), as unpretty as an autopsy and hung nearby, argues otherwise. Modern means denying mortality? Another Manet stunner, "Dead Toreador" is as stark as a Weegee murder scene. What you won't see much of in this atom-smasher of a room, though, is work by Degas. Just a couple of old-style history paintings, a portrait-and-still life mash-up — the glorious "Woman Seated Beside a Vase of Flowers (Madame Paul Valpinçon?)" — and a scene of a horse-racing accident, its figure of a fallen jockey surely inspired by Manet's bullfighter.

Images of horse racing — the sport had huge Paris vogue — make up another, much smaller section of the show. Other groupings are devoted to leisure pursuits such as beach tourism and cafe culture. (The side-by-side placement of Manet's "Plum Brandy" and Degas's "In a Café (The Absinthe Drinker)" is one of the exhibitions's great pairings.) And still others bring viewers into social networks the artists shared, which included the much-loved Morisot family. (Berthe Morisot married Manet's younger brother, Eugene.)

Not everything in these installations is riveting, but at least in some of them the Manet-to-Degas ratio is fairly even. And everywhere there are indelible sights. Manet's portrait of the biracial actress Jeanne Duval, she of the coal-black eyes and parachute dress, is a traffic stopper. So is Degas's monumentally edgy "Family Portrait (The Bellelli Family)." (It's his one blockbusterish entry.)

And there are surprises. The inclusion of Degas's chilling 1868-69 narrative painting — once titled "The Rape," now "Interior" — of what appears to be sexual predation in progress identifies a strain of dark-minded voyeurism in the work of both artists that the exhibition, organized in New York by the Met curators Stephan Wolohojian and Ashley E. Dunn, never directly addresses.

Throughout the years, Manet and Degas remained an odd couple, particularly in their politics. Patriots both, they fought side by side defending Paris during the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71). But in other matters, their loyalties diverged, as suggested in a dynamic section called "From One War to Another."

One of the wars addressed is the American Civil War, which predictably outraged Manet, who had adamant views on the evils of slavery. And we find him asserting his partisanship in two splashy, swashbuckling marine paintings, both celebrating an 1864 Union naval victory. Nearby are two thematically corresponding paintings by Degas. They are also about America and, covertly at least, about its racial politics, but could hardly offer a greater contrast.

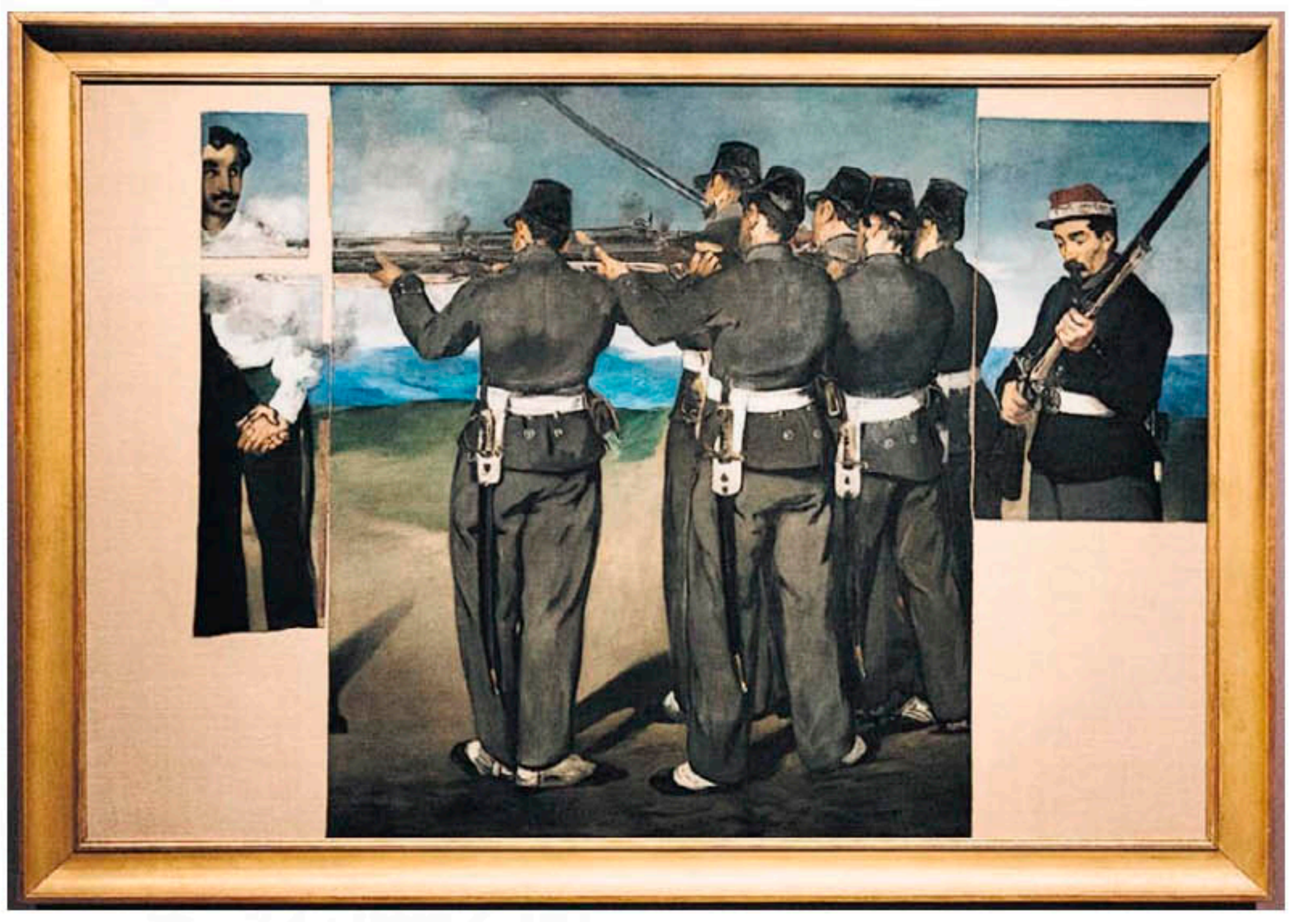
Degas's paintings date to 1873 and were done on a visit to New Orleans, where his mother was born and his family ran a lucrative business in the slavery-dependent cotton industry. That business is the subject of the paintings: top-hatted white merchants gather in an office, chat, read the paper, inspect samples of a new crop. Business continues as usual, as if the effects of a terrible war and the failures of Reconstruction — during which members of Degas's family were active in a white supremacist group — didn't exist.

Whatever Degas's opinions of Manet's political thinking — he referred to him once as "more vain than intelligent" — his belief in the importance of his art held firm, and may even have grown stronger after Manet's death from syphilis at 51. And if gestures of tribute speak louder than words, Degas made a powerful one. In his increasingly reclusive later years he set about assembling a personal collection of Manet's work, a sampling of which, in a section called "Degas After Manet," concludes the show.

Degas acquired, as they came to market, a significant group of Manet's drawings, a nearly complete set of his prints and eight oil paintings, several of which are here. Most are small: a penumbral portrait of a grieving Berthe Morisot is one; a high-color likeness of a smiling "Gypsy With a Cigarette" another. (Bizet's "Carmen" was a popular hit at the time.) The outstanding picture, though, is a monumental but strangely fragmented image of an act of political violence.

Titled "The Execution of Maximilian," it depicts the firing-squad death in 1867 of an Austrian archduke whom Napoleon III had set up as a straw man ruler in Mexico and then, when colonization failed, abandoned to his fate. The painting was so polemically pointed that Manet had to keep it hidden in storage. At some point someone, probably a family member, cut up the canvas and sold off pieces. Gradually, ardently, Degas rounded up and preserved some of them. (In 1992, the present owner of the fragments, the National Gallery in London, mounted the pieces on backing in a partial restoration of the original composition.)

Degas and Manet, at the start of their careers, first met in the galleries of a grand public museum. In the end, they kept company in a small private one, the shadowy rooms of Degas's Paris apartment. That object-stuffed home-museum might seem, to some of us, very unmodern. It was a shrine, a reliquary, a devotional site, overseen by a monkish artist who is personally hard to like and aesthetically hard to track, one who is a distinctly second-place presence in the Met's great show, yet who emerges from it, in the end, a torchbearer hero.



Movies

AMY NICHOLSON | FILM REVIEW

YANA BLAJEVA/LIONSGATE

Sylvester Stallone as Barney, a member of an all-star mercenary squadron in "Expend4bles," a film directed by Scott Waugh.

Brawn Brigade Trudges On

Sylvester Stallone is the leader of the team in the fourth installment of this franchise.

THE TONE OF "Expend4bles" can be summarized in a single close-up: a corpse's severed hand flipping the bird. To its director, Scott Waugh, and all those responsible for resurrecting this dormant action franchise, the middle finger gestures toward this fourth installment's intended style: macho, smirky and defiant. At its best, the film is all three. This all-star mercenary squadron composed of '80s-to-aughts brutes is the cinematic equivalent to Slash's Snakepit, a supergroup throwback to an era when men were meatheads and we in the audience merrily cheered them on.

Expend4bles
Rated for curses and extravagantly digitalized carnage. Running time: 1 hour 43 minutes. In theaters.

I'll admit I still did, at least for some of this swaggering inanity. Why resist the impossible physics of Curtis Jackson (better known as 50 Cent) body-slamming a baddie back and forth like a toddler throwing a temper tantrum with his dolly? Or Dolph Lundgren lampooning his aging vision by screwing a prescription lens onto his sniper rifle? Or Sylvester Stallone grumbling about a thumb-wrestling injury that he's chosen to nurse with a tiny custom leather sling? Or Jason Statham, the comically gifted bruiser now promoted to the series' lead, doing, well, pretty much anything?

In an even earlier era, Statham's nimble skills would have awarded him a career like Jimmy Cagney's. But he's stuck working in ours, with a script that offers a few enjoyable quips — he calls an enemy "a sneaky little sausage" — but mostly lets him down. The screenwriters Kurt Wimmer, Tad Daggerhart and Max Adams seem to share a mutual disinterest in the plot, intoning the words "detonator" and "World War 3" until the threats become background static.

These high jinks would be more fun if the actors didn't look so unflappable. Nothing breaks their composure. Not explosions or blood spatters, not beheadings or nuclear bombs, not even the sight of a warship careening in the Sea of Japan. (Perhaps because all of the above have been cheaply rendered in post.) Even a back-flipping, insult-slinging seduction scene between Statham and a new teammate, played by Megan Fox, climaxes without a lip-gloss smudge. It's just one more artificial palpitation.

The energy sputters along on throwaway gags, like when Jacob Scipio, as a motormouthed young Expendable, sips a cocktail with a pink umbrella at a wake. There's an absurdly enjoyable detour with a lecherous internet influencer (Samuel Black) and a shootout interrupted by a stereo blasting 50 Cent's "P.I.M.P.," which is just plain absurd. Is Jackson the rapper in the same universe as Jackson the assassin? Does he moonlight in carnage?

Andy Garcia, Randy Couture, Levy Tran and the great martial artist Tony Jaa round out our cast of protagonists while Iko Uwais heads up a generic goon squad, giving all the intensity he can to a villain written with no identifiable traits other than a scar. When things get dull, there's always Lundgren in the background, playing up his character's nearsightedness with the daffy charm of Marilyn Monroe. But the film's last reel is so awful — so sneeringly contemptuous of our good-faith efforts to play along with these shenanigans — that we leave the theater still thinking of that middle finger. It sure seemed pointed at us.

NATALIA WINKELMAN | FILM REVIEW

Fighting to Be Free In the Ring and Out

A professional wrestler embraces a campy femininity in his ascent to the big time.

PRIME VIDEO/AMAZON

Gael García Bernal plays Saúl Armendáriz, a real-life luchador, in "Cassandro."

WHEN BARTON FINK, the neurotic screenwriter cooked up by the Coen brothers, scrambles to write a wrestling picture, his peers prescribe the basics. Tell us the man's ambitions. Entangle him in a romance. You know the drill. Not even in Barton's most delirious dreams could he have envisioned "Cassandro," about a flamboyant, sequin-clad luchador who takes his ring name from a telenovela. But I bet Barton could have drafted the film's outline, which uses the same squelchy gym bag of tricks as many underdog sports dramas.

Based on a real star of Mexican professional wrestling, or lucha libre, Saúl Armendáriz (Gael García Bernal) is a profoundly unusual athlete wedged into a biopic that sometimes feels like passable stage fighting: elegantly executed but drained of danger.

Directed by Roger Ross Williams ("Life, Animated"), the movie depicts the decisive, late-1980s period when Saúl ascended out of obscurity and into the big time, braving countless training montages and a few private miseries on his way to the top.

We meet the striver in Texas in early adulthood, when he is assisting his mother, Yocasta (Perla De La Rosa), with her laundry business and wrestling at a nearby club. Using the name El Topo (The Mole), he tumbles into the ring masked and petite, a pipsqueak doomed to act as a punching bag opposite giants. "Let me guess. You're always cast as the runt?" challenges Sabrina (Roberta Colindrez), a local lucha hotshot and trainer. She spies potential in Saúl, and offers to coach him pro bono.

Colindrez, like many of the actors in this movie, is a superlative performer. Her character is granted little interiority — she serves by turns as Saúl's fierce advocate and his shoulder to cry on — but alongside Bernal she radiates a cool glow fit for a film less shackled by the ebbs and flows of established convention. In conversations with Sabrina, Saúl toggles between English and Spanish, reserving the latter for colloquialisms or teasing, and the mixture gives their dialogue an organic rhythm. He uses the same blend of languages with his lover, Gerardo (Raúl Castillo), a married luchador with kids whom Saúl sees in secret.

Saúl's sexuality is at once a major plot point and somewhat underexplored. With gentle nudging from Sabrina, Saúl, who came out as a teen and is supported by his mother, soon reinvents his ring persona as the campy Cassandro, an "exótico," or luchador who plays with femininity. The character initially attracts slurs and heckling, but quickly (and perhaps too effortlessly) starts winning matches and becomes a fan favorite. This is an era when H.I.V. and AIDS panic was at its shrillest, and although the real-life Cassandro was sometimes rebuffed by homophobic opponents, the movie never mentions the epidemic. (Williams wrote the screenplay with David Teague.)

Cassandro
Rated R for drugs and slugs. Running time: 1 hour 47 minutes. On Amazon Prime Video.

"Cassandro" is at its strongest when it zeros in on the relationship between Saúl and Gerardo, who share a physical intimacy that both echoes their fighting careers and acts as an escape from them. Alone, safe from onlookers, the pair tussle in bed. "Don't you think he's sexy?" Saúl says, referring to Cassandro as if he were a third person who might join them.

Williams, an Oscar-winning documentary filmmaker, is an expert orchestrator of naturalism. The trouble is that lucha libre, built on glitz, is anything but naturalistic. The self-assured freedom Saúl channels in bed never makes its way into scenes in the ring, which tire when they should dazzle.

FILM REVIEWS

The Trial

Not rated. In Spanish, with subtitles. Running time: 2 hours 57 minutes. In theaters.

CRITIC'S PICK

Created entirely out of the televised 1985 trial of Argentina's military junta, "The Trial" lays bare horrific crimes while showing the courage of victims, survivors and their families. Ulises de la Orden's conscientious documentary is a necessary act of memory — for such is the only way justice truly endures — and it reminds viewers of the Dante-esque extent of the abuses beyond the stories of "the disappeared," the thousands who were snatched and killed because they were labeled left-wing opponents or on other pretexts.

De la Orden's respectful, smartly abridged account draws on the 530 hours recorded by public television to compile a kind of oral history, rather than tracking the legal arguments. The testimony by dignified witnesses from all walks of life is gripping, even when viewed obliquely because of the camera placement. Cutaway shots show the smug-looking military brass who are on trial, the judges watching as impassively as they can manage and a rapt crowd in the courtroom.

The director rightly recognizes that nothing is to be gained by smoothing over the facts. The military junta that seized power (from President Isabel Perón) in 1976, and its cronies and followers, raped, murdered, tortured and kidnapped. They trafficked orphans of "subversives," and stole (real estate and cash, while also raiding homes for everything from cookbooks to women's underwear). We hear all about their mafialike behavior — throwing their victims out of airplanes into the sea — and how they made a grisly mockery of the rule of law.

FILM FORUM

From left, Julio Strassera and Luis Moreno Ocampo, prosecutors of the Argentine military junta in 1985, as seen in the documentary "The Trial."

The 177-minute film concludes with the dramatic sentencing of the regime's de facto president, Jorge Rafael Videla, and others. The document might resemble an artifact from another era. But it offers a stirring universal example of justice served, at a time when so many American voters fear the prospect of an authoritarian president already impeached once for inciting an insurrection.

NICOLAS RAPOLD

The Storms Of Jeremy Thomas

Not rated. Running time: 1 hour 34 minutes. In theaters.

If you're familiar with a certain streak of transgressive independent cinema, you're likely familiar with the films of the producer Jeremy Thomas, even if you don't know his name: Jonathan Glazer's "Sexy Beast," Bernardo Bertolucci's "The Last Emperor," Nagisa Oshima's "Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence" with David Bowie and several works by David Cronenberg and Nicolas Roeg, including Cronenberg's controversial adaptation of J.G. Ballard's 1973 novel "Crash."

Thomas is, by all accounts, a filmmaker's producer, and his dedication to pushing the envelope of big-screen entertainment is the focus of Mark Cousins's latest documentary, "The Storms of Jeremy Thomas."

Cousins, the man behind the behemoth documentary series on the history of cinema, "The Story of Film: An Odyssey," seems more than determined to make Thomas into a household name.

Presented as a road movie, "The Storms of Jeremy Thomas" follows the two men as they wind their way through France toward the Cannes Film Festival, where Thomas is promoting his latest project, Takashi Miike's 2019 crime thriller "First Love." Cousins presents the audio of his interviews with Thomas over footage of their travels — in subject-focused chapters titled "Sex," "Politics" and the like — edited together with clips from the films Thomas has produced and a plethora of other cinematic references and influences.

The whole effort comes across more as an advertisement for Thomas's genius — and Cousins's obsession with him — than a true portrait of a discerning producer of outsider cinema. Even Tilda Swinton, a star of the Thomas-produced Jim Jarmusch film "Only Lovers Left Alive," can only offer platitudes, characterizing Thomas as a "storm" within the industry.

You may come away from "The Storms of Jeremy Thomas" thinking of him as a fascinating man, but perhaps not as the cinematic prince that Cousins insists on crowning him.

CLAIRE SHAFFER

Something You Said Last Night

Not rated. In English and Italian, with subtitles. Running time: 1 hour 36 minutes. In theaters.

The family members in Luis De Filippis's assiduous new film keep busy during their beachside vacation. Not by swimming and sunbathing but by bickering and nit-picking, over slights both big (what it means to quit school) and small (what it means to lose a card game).

Or maybe that's just how Mona (Ramona Milano), her husband, Guido (Joey Parro), and their wayward 20-something daughters, Siena (Paige Evans) and Ren (Carmen Madonia), who is transgender, express love: by ending conversations with tears and exposed resentments, only to make nice and do it again the next day.

Loosely based on the writer-director's own Canadian Italian family, this intimately observational film is in no rush to capture oversize dramatics but also small moments, like a birthday celebration at a kitchen table. Its only real emotional punch comes when the sisters accuse each other of being the family's biggest disappointment.

In the film's press notes, De Filippis said she wanted to make a movie "where trans women are not vilified, sensationalized, or eroticized." Mission accomplished. Ren, an aspiring writer, is decidedly human: impetuous, shy, silly — a victim of, if anything, insecurities.

But she's earthbound to a fault, dramatically. Unexceptional transgender characters are arguably markers of cinema's progress; Trace Lysette's understated performance is what made her prosaic transgender character so moving in "Monica." (That film was also invested in bigger stakes.) But one can only watch Renata, and this film, do so little for so long before yearning for more than naturalism and tenderness to drive the slice-of-life story.

ERIK PIEPENBURG

FILM REVIEWS

Still Film

Not rated. Running time: 1 hour 12 minutes. In theaters.

CRITIC'S PICK

"Have you ever had a memory of a memory?" The question comes from an unseen prosecutor. His beleaguered witness, flummoxed, recalls once taking a friend's story (a bizarre tale about a pervert giving away free bologna on a street corner) and presenting it as his own. Juxtaposed with the dialogue is a still from "The Sandlot," the 1993 family comedy.

Composed of many other provocations — clipped questioning about the industry paired with 35-millimeter publicity stills from many major films, including "Apollo 13" and "Bamboozled" — the writer-director James N. Kienitz Wilkins's "Still Film" is a stunning, acute critique of the regressive artistic sensibilities that plague contemporary Hollywood.

The challenging, experimental movie is presented in the loose form of a trial. It involves four unseen characters: prosecutor, defendant, witness and recorder. Each is voiced by the director. The players offer conspiracy theories about an evil Tom Hanks, and salient talking points about the erosion of the cinematic experience. Movie stills placidly shimmer, like old vacation photos beamed through a slide projector.

Eventually, the circular dialogue finds a center: The film posits that Hollywood, through a reliance on existing intellectual property, indulges our desire for an uncomplicated past, imposing suffocating limits on artists and crushing audiences' collective imagination. Wilkins demands that we make new cinematic memories, lest we lose ourselves.

ROBERT DANIELS

AUTOMATIC MOVING CO

A scene from "Still Film," a documentary by James N. Kienitz Wilkins.

LAURENT CHAMPOUSSIN/IFC FILMS

Laure Calamy, center, is part of a nasty family in "The Origin of Evil."

NEON

Mohana Krishnan as Tamira in "It Lives Inside," a film by Bishal Dutta.

The Origin of Evil

Not rated. In French, with subtitles. Running time: 2 hours 5 minutes. In theaters.

CRITIC'S PICK

Think "Clue" by the French seaside, add a splash of sleaze, crank up the queerness, and you get "The Origin of Evil," a catty family-fortune thriller by the writer and director Sébastien Marnier.

When her landlady gives her the boot, Stéphane (Laure Calamy), a worker at a sardine-tinning factory, contacts her estranged father, Serge (Jacques Weber), an extravagantly wealthy restaurateur in the vein of Logan Roy from "Succession." Like Logan, Serge is fed up with his parasitic kin, and behind his ailing, burly grandpa look, there's old-fashioned alpha-dog savagery.

Serge's relatives, however, are nothing like the inept Roy offspring: There's his ice-queen daughter George (Doria Tillier), who manages his businesses; his wife, Louise (Dominique Blanc), an impeccably coiffured, Gloria Swanson-type; and the stony maid, Agnès (Véronique Ruggia Saura).

These ladies aren't fooled when mousy Stéphane arrives at the family's island mansion claiming to want nothing but bonding time with dad. Stéphane may be angling for a cut of Serge's fortune, but so is everyone else. Marnier captures these power plays by framing the characters in playful split-screens à la Brian De Palma.

On the mainland, Stéphane pays routine visits to her incarcerated girlfriend, whom she keeps spellbound with sexual favors. Her loyalty, touching at first, grows increasingly questionable.

Marnier shakes up the balance of sympathy as Serge's misogynistic mean streak becomes apparent. Foul as they are, Stéphane's evil stepmother and sister may be worth rooting for. A tremendous Calamy (of "Full Time" and the TV series "Call My Agent!") is central to the film's gripping uncertainty.

Abounding with nasty women, "The Origin of Evil" could have easily been flattened by the weight of a feminist objective. Untethered from such neat messaging, this decadent murder-movie takes the online credo, "be gay, do crimes," and runs with it — to delicious results.

BEATRICE LOAYZA

It Lives Inside

Rated PG-13 for terror, violent content, bloody images, brief strong language and teen drug use. Running time: 1 hour 39 minutes. In theaters.

Why did you even come here, Samidha scoffs at her mother, if you were just going to be another Desi housewife? It's about as piercing a jab as an American child could throw at their immigrant parent, and emblematic of the kind of disdain central to "It Lives Inside," a social-horror movie from the writer-director Bishal Dutta, in his feature debut.

As Samidha (Megan Suri), an Indian American teenager, has gotten older, she's increasingly distanced herself from anything that might reveal her cultural identity. She goes by Sam to her peers, avoids speaking Hindi and had a mysterious break from Tamira (Mohana Krishnan), an Indian American classmate who used to be her best friend. When she lashes out at Tamira, she unwittingly unleashes a monster ripped from Hindu folklore.

It's a compelling premise. And as a horror movie with frights and an effective score, the film largely works. But the weightier themes around internalized racism and the immigrant experience fail to push beyond the basics, and the allegory doesn't always succeed — a connection between the back story of the film's monster and the idea of cultural self-acceptance is pretty flimsy.

Still, it's a promising debut from Dutta, who offers a fresh premise that proves a natural fit for the genre. The themes will feel familiar to the American children of any diaspora. High school is scary to begin with. But when there's only one other classmate of your race, what's worse than being mistaken for each other?

BRANDON YU

Paul Robeson: 'I'm a Negro. I'm an American.'

Not rated. In English and German, with subtitles. Running time: 1 hour 27 minutes. In theaters.

The opening of "Paul Robeson: 'I'm a Negro. I'm an American.'" offers an unintentional caveat about the 1989 documentary directed by the East German filmmaker Kurt Tetzlaff. Paul Robeson's rich baritone undergirds archival footage of Black children playing in a dusty open space, smokestacks in the background. The use by the director of a Negro spiritual, however beautiful, swaps whatever joy these kids might have been experiencing (they are at play after all) for a questionable sentimentality around Black life and suffering.

But then much of Tetzlaff's documentary, recently restored and receiving its first theatrical run in New York, casts an aura — admiring and melancholy — around Robeson to the detriment of a more shaded portrait. The athlete-performer-activist's achievements are well known (gridiron great, Columbia University Law graduate, first Black Othello on Broadway), but in this film, their roots and meaning go mostly unexplored.

The documentary shows glimmers of promise when featuring interviewees who had an intimate grasp of the America that shaped but also tore down Robeson. Harry Belafonte turns teary talking about Robeson's grace. The singer Pete Seeger's account of white rioters attacking attendees at a Peekskill, N.Y., concert in support of workers in 1949 remains chilling. Tetzlaff aims to dive into Robeson's mistreatment by the United States government for his activism, as well as his expressed admiration of the Soviet Union and its people — but the movie sticks to the shallow end.

Hinted at, but never fully realized here, is a more compelling film about the tantalizing promise Black progressives like Robeson held for Eastern Bloc citizens, like the director.

LISA KENNEDY

26.2 to Life

Not rated. Running time: 1 hour 30 minutes. In theaters.

Christine Yoo's documentary "26.2 to Life" tells the story of a unique race: the San Quentin Prison Marathon, run by inmates of the maximum-security facility in California within the walls of its heavily guarded yard.

As the film makes clear, with its deliberate, observational style, the mental fortitude required to endure this marathon is extraordinary: The competitors must trace the same tedious loop around a makeshift track more than 100 times to complete the 26.2-mile distance, with only their fellow inmates and a handful of volunteers to cheer them on. It's not a setting that inspires a meditative state of mind.

Many of these men are facing life sentences with little hope of parole, and training for the marathon enables them to derive some meaning from their time inside. "It allows you to feel like you're doing something normal," one runner describes. "Like you're doing something that's not prison."

Yoo was granted exceptional access to San Quentin, and when she depicts the mundane qualities of life there — inmates working odd jobs, writing letters, passing the time alone in their cells — the movie gains some of the penetrating clarity of one of Frederick Wiseman's films. The in-prison material also has a lo-fi look that's a refreshing change from the glossy style of many recent docs, and the various off-site interviews with family members of the inmates expand the scope of their stories in an enriching way.

When the movie concentrates on the race, it verges on sentimental, trotting out heartfelt speeches and cloying musical cues — not entirely unjustified, considering the inmates' tragic back stories and inspiring achievements. But it compromises an already compelling event.

CALUM MARSH

The Saint Of Second Chances

Not rated. Running time: 1 hour 33 minutes. On Netflix.

Bill Veeck, a scrappy, showmanship-savvy Major League Baseball impresario who survived grave injuries as a Marine during World War II, would make a hard act for any child to follow. But you can't say that one of his sons hasn't tried. That would be Mike Veeck, the subject of the peppy new documentary "The Saint of Second Chances."

Now in his seventies, Mike is an engaging onscreen presence in this story, whether appearing as himself or as played in re-enactments by Charlie Day ("It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia"). The movie was directed by Morgan Neville ("20 Feet From Stardom") and Jeff Malmberg ("Marwencol"), and is a tad more fanciful than their prior work.

But fancy is a good fit for the Veecks, it turns out. We see that Bill believed that "the most delightful way to spend an afternoon or evening" was at the ballpark. In the 1970s, reigning over Chicago's Comiskey Park with the town's second-banana MLB team, the White Sox, he was a ramshackle marketing innovator. Mike tried to match him: A disastrous 1979 gathering at Comiskey called Disco Demolition Night, where a record-burning stunt turned into a riot that resulted in dozens of arrests, was Mike's idea. The fiasco got deserved blowback, which sent the younger Veeck into a long tailspin.

This movie's feel-good narrative essentially hinges on whether you buy Mike's assertion that he wouldn't have done the event if he "thought it would hurt anyone." Once Mike got back in the game years later — through the Independent League ball organization — he brought the fun in eccentric ways, including a ball-carrying pig. And the story of a personal tragedy in Mike's family life is affecting.

GLENN KENNY

Neither Confirm Nor Deny

Not rated. Running time: 1 hour 33 minutes. Available to rent or buy on most major platforms.

The C.I.A. mission recalled in "Neither Confirm Nor Deny," Philip Carter's neat and steadily paced documentary, sounds like the stuff of a Tom Clancy Cold War thriller. In the film, C.I.A. veterans and journalists recount a 1974 U.S. operation to recover a Soviet nuclear submarine that had sunk in the Pacific six years earlier. It's a high-risk mission made more suspenseful by technical challenges, the looming specter of Watergate and a need for secrecy in the face of scrutiny from Russia and the news media.

The story assembles before our eyes like an illustration in a manual for superspies. The goal: obtain valuable nuke data. The tool for the job: a big ship with the ability to snatch the sub and sneak it away to American shores. The cover story: an undersea mining operation fronted by Howard Hughes.

David Sharp, who directed the mission and wrote a book about it, is the most prominently featured of the wonky talking heads here. He relates amazing details — like what the U.S. did with bodies of Soviet sailors that were discovered — in the understated manner of a kind science teacher. The Pulitzer-winning journalist Seymour M. Hersh, who wrote about the operation for The New York Times in the 1970s, offers a salty insider perspective.

Almost in passing, we hear of the C.I.A.'s role in the bloody 1973 overthrow of the socialist government of Salvador Allende, who was then the democratically elected leader of Chile. In that light, the documentary, with its triumphant account, feels a little too selective in presenting the agency's legacy, and its title — which seems to celebrate the government's concealment of its actions from the public — comes across as misjudged.

NICOLAS RAPOLD

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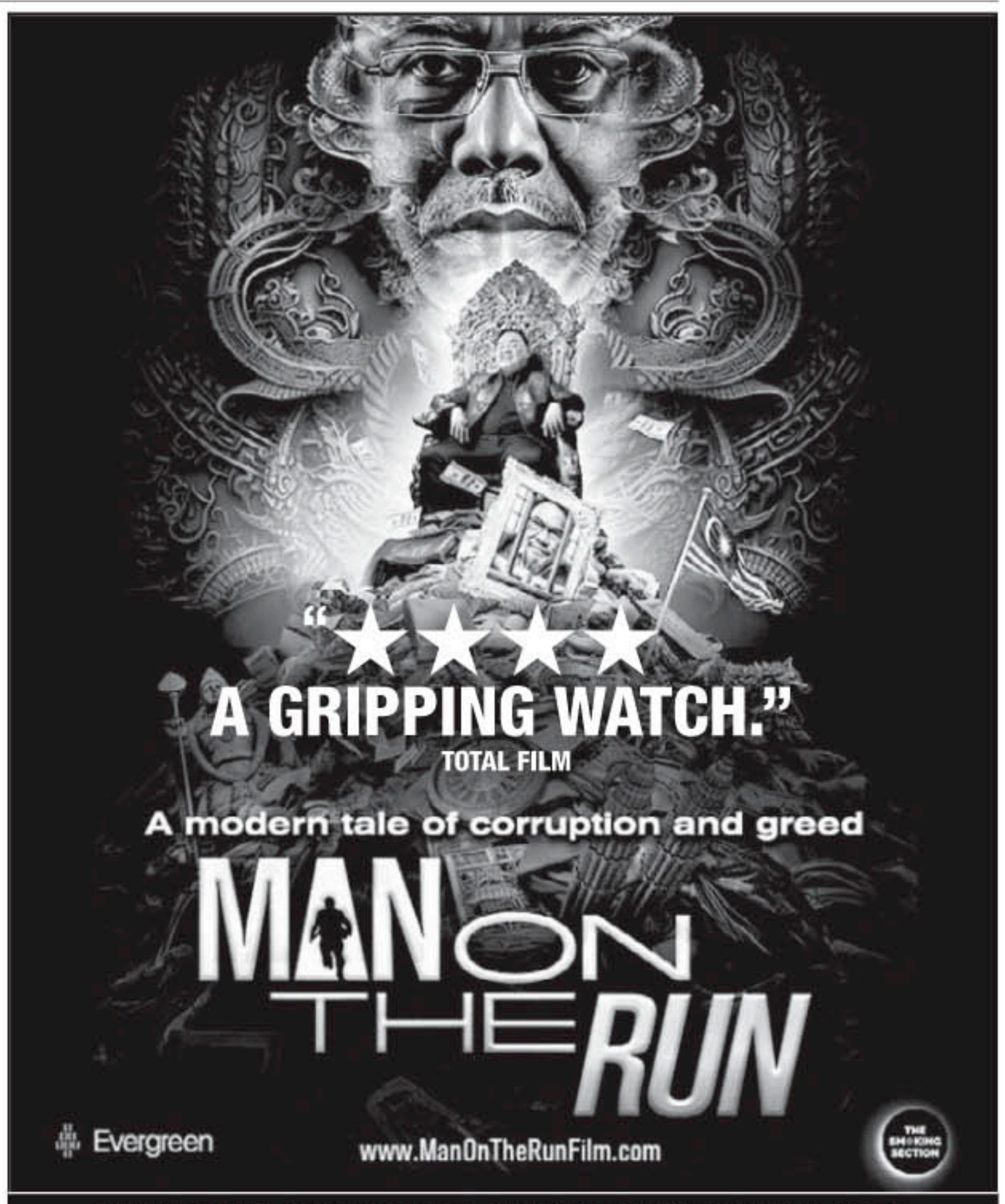

Q&A with filmmaker CASSIUS MICHAEL KIM TONIGHT after the 7:15 show
EXCLUSIVE ENGAGEMENT STARTS TODAY
VILLAGE EAST BY ANGELIKA
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Fri: 12:15, 2:35, 4:55, 7:15, 9:55
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J. HOBERMAN | REWIND

KINO LORBER AND THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Virginia Leith and Frank Silvera in Stanley Kubrick's first feature, "Fear and Desire," which arrived in 1952. Kubrick later called it "an oddity."

A Study of Men Under Stress

Stanley Kubrick disparaged his first film, but it's getting a new run 70 years after its release.

SEEN IN RETROSPECT, a first feature by a major filmmaker can be a revelation particularly if, as with Stanley Kubrick's low-budget war movie "Fear and Desire," it concerns a career-long preoccupation — and even more so if the filmmaker has attempted to suppress it.

An independent production which, although fictional, premiered in the documentary section of the 1952 Venice Film Festival, "Fear and Desire" is getting a weeklong run at Metrograph, 70 years after its release in the United States.

Kubrick, then 23, had left his job as a staff photographer for Look magazine when he undertook the project, crediting himself as director, photographer and editor, as well as producer. The means were modest; the story, written by a high-school buddy, Howard Sackler, was epic. A portentous voice-over locates the action "outside history." Four universal — albeit obviously American — soldiers, trapped six miles behind enemy lines, battle their respective demons in an attempted return to base.

Rewind is an occasional column covering revived, restored and rediscovered movies.

In addition to its allegorical framework, the film partakes in then fashionable existentialism. The same actor (Kenneth Harp) is cast as both the squad's loquaciously philosophical lieutenant and an equally introspective enemy general. The soundtrack is heavy with the men's internal musings. The new digital restoration includes nine minutes, mostly post-dubbed dialogue, cut after Venice when the film's title was changed from "The Shape of Fear" by the distributor Joseph Burstyn, the pre-eminent U.S. importer of Italian neorealist films who also released the independent classic "Little Fugitive" in 1953.

Fear and Desire
Through Sept. 29 at Metrograph in Manhattan, metrograph.com.

However arty, "Fear and Desire" is squarely in the American B-movie tradition. The situation — a cutoff platoon — and the pragmatic use of close-ups suggest Samuel Fuller's Korean War quickie "The Steel Helmet," which opened in 1951. Instantly notorious for depicting an American war crime, it is a movie Kubrick might well have seen.

In Fuller's film, an enraged soldier shoots an unarmed North Korean prisoner of war. In Kubrick's, an unbalanced recruit (the future director Paul Mazursky) abuses and ultimately kills a local woman (Virginia Leith) who, having stumbled upon the four soldiers, is bound to a tree, and left in his charge. The sequence which juxtaposes Mazursky's babbling with the woman's petrified silence is the movie's heart of darkness. Although Leith has virtually no dialogue, her image was featured in the movie's ads.

"Fear and Desire" is clumsily dubbed but strikingly photographed. A.H. Weiler's New York Times review was both sympathetic and supportive, crediting Kubrick and Sackler with "a moody, often visually powerful study" of men under stress. The movie was not, however, a success. Nor was it a fond memory for its maker.

When "Fear and Desire" was revived at Film Forum in 1994, Kubrick had a Warner Bros. publicist bombard local critics with letters expressing Kubrick's feeling that the movie was nothing more than a "bumbling amateur film exercise," written by a failed poet (an unkind reference to Sackler, who some 25 years after "Fear and Desire" was awarded a Pulitzer for his play "The Great White Hope").

Kubrick characterized "Fear and Desire" as "a completely inept oddity, boring and pretentious." While undeniably pretentious, the movie is neither inept nor boring. Its oddity lies in its being both a prelude and footnote to Kubrick's remarkable career.

FILM REVIEWS

Superpower

Not rated. In English and Ukrainian, with subtitles. Running time: 1 hour 55 minutes. Watch on Paramount+.

Near the beginning of "Superpower," Sean Penn tries to pre-empt the criticism generated by his previous trips to conflict zones. "Weathered though it is," he says in narration, "my famous face gets me access to places and people I may otherwise not have known."

That is undoubtedly true, even if, in the past, he has used that access to lob softball questions at El Chapo. When it comes to chronicling the war in Ukraine, the subject of this documentary, which Penn directed with Aaron Kaufman, it is hard to begrudge the actor's mission. Like the French intellectual Bernard-Henri Lévy, who has been making his own documentaries on the war, Penn appears to have one eye in the mirror, but at least he's taking some sort of action.

"Superpower" began as a film about the unlikely presidency of the Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelensky and his path from comic actor to politician. Much of the first part consists of material Penn compiled from the preinvasion period. Experts lay out the complexities of the country's 21st-century history. Ukrainians reflect on the legacy of the Maidan protests and express skepticism about Zelensky's potential.

Penn scores a coup by getting an on-camera interview with Zelensky on the first day of Russia's invasion, and he films him on two additional occasions. Zelensky's words are often familiar but still stirring. Potentially more of a stunt is Penn's trip to the front, which seems as much about proving his mettle as getting the story.

BEN KENIGSBERG

My Sailor, My Love

Not rated. Running time: 1 hour 43 minutes. In theaters.

Howard (James Cosmo), the Irish widower and retired sea captain of Klaus Haro's bittersweet drama "My Sailor, My Love," is furious that his daughter has hired a good-natured housekeeper named Annie (Brid Brennan), to disturb his seclusion. At first, the grump does his best to scare off the invader. "Never darken my door again!" he thunders, as though he's subconsciously aware that the writers Kirsi Vikman and Jimmy Karlsson are drawing on centuries of love stories about savage men and civilizing women. The production designer John Hand has even worked in a nod to the rose from "Beauty and the Beast."

The curveball is that after rushing the romance (the brute is tamed in a week!), Haro shifts his attention back to the daughter, Grace (Catherine Walker), who is t understandably aggrieved. Her father's always treated her cruelly. Grace's resentment is an astute twist. Imagine Disney's singing teapot enrolling in primal scream therapy, except when Grace attends a support group for women who've given too much, she can't let out her steam.

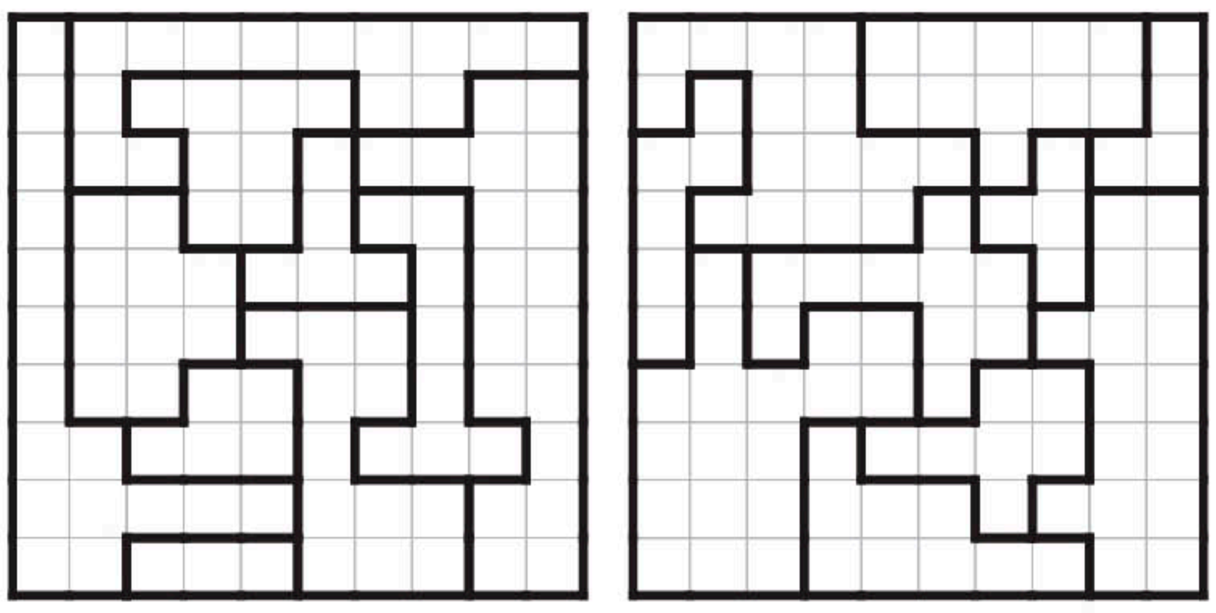
Life, and the film's costume design, haven't been fair to Walker's self-sacrificing miserablist. (When can we stop dressing this kind of character in wan beige and headache-inducing braids?) Every one of her scenes is an indignity overemphasized by a strings and piano score that needs to ease up. The painful dynamic is credible; the dialogue not so much. Still, the actors are in full command of our empathy, especially Brennan's gray-haired caretaker who, when she cracks open her heart, seems to glow from within.

AMY NICHOLSON

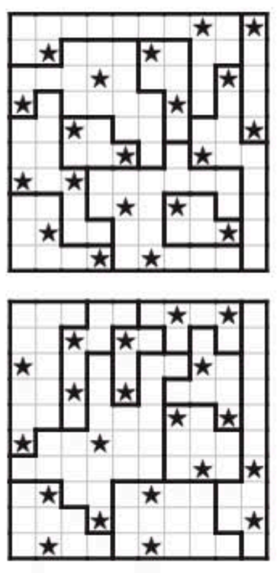
PARAMOUNT+

Sean Penn interviewed Volodymyr Zelensky for his documentary.

Two Not Touch



ANSWERS TO PREVIOUS PUZZLES



Put two stars in each row, column and region of the grid. No two stars may touch, not even diagonally.

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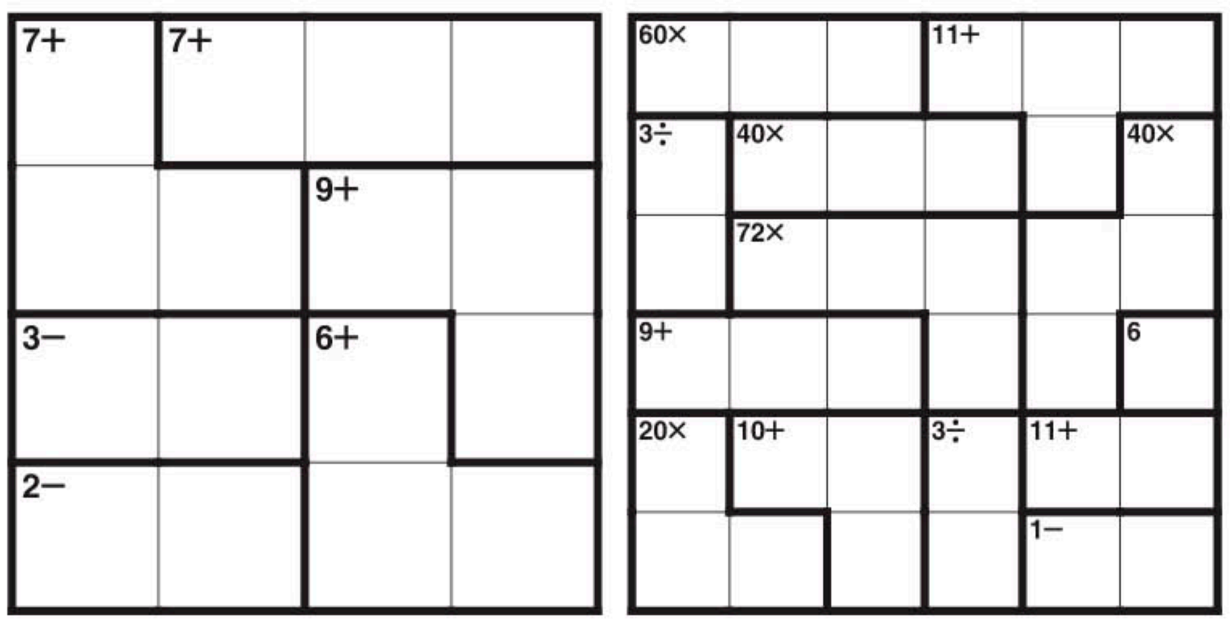
Brain Tickler

What two U.S. state capitals — one on the East Coast, the other in a Mountain state — each consist of a common English word around a two-letter state postal abbreviation?

PUZZLE BY WILL SHORTZ

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER In back-to-back years, President Bill Clinton won best spoken word album Grammy awards.

KenKen



ANSWERS TO PREVIOUS PUZZLES

2	1	3	4
1	3	4	2
4	2	1	3
3	4	2	1

6	2	4	5	1	3
1	3	6	2	5	4
3	4	5	6	2	1
2	1	3	4	6	5
4	5	2	1	3	6
5	6	1	3	4	2

Fill the grid with digits so as not to repeat a digit in any row or column, and so that the digits within each heavily outlined box will produce the target number shown, by using addition, subtraction, multiplication or division, as indicated in the box. A 4x4 grid will use the digits 1-4. A 6x6 grid will use 1-6.

For more games: www.nytimes.com/games

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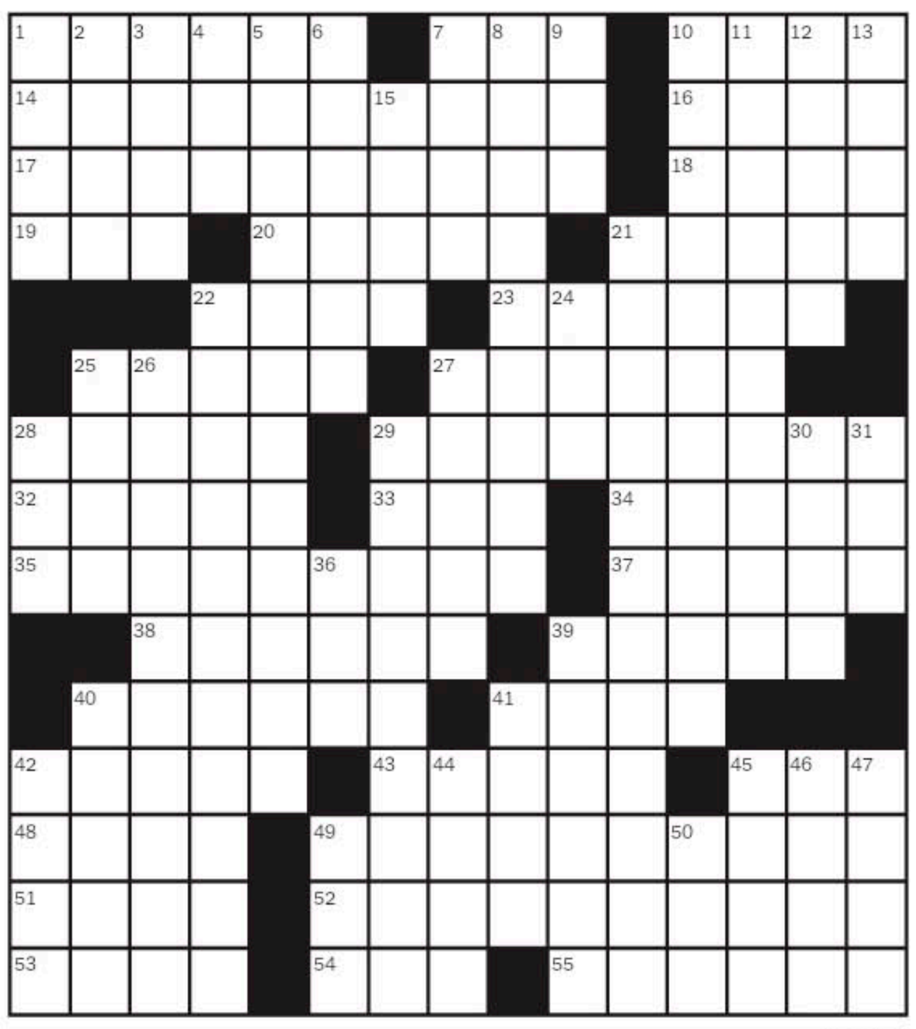
Crossword | Edited by Will Shortz

PUZZLE BY RAFAEL MUSA AND MICHAEL LIEBERMAN



9/22/23

ACROSS

1 Furry animals with black-tipped tails
7 It's mind-altering
10 Unresolved
14 Dessert whose main ingredient is grated
16 2018 film set in Mexico that was nominated for best picture
17 Like tough love?
18 Word with going or God
19 Admission needs, informally
20 Dapper pachyderm
21 1945 conference site
22 Prominent feature of Man Ray's painting "Observatory Time: The Lovers"
23 Australian tennis great Goolagong
25 Subjects of some modern bans, informally
27 False start?
28 Up in the air
29 Played pickup, say
32 Kind of diet
33 ___ favor
34 "Star Wars" prequel series
35 "OK, I'm done complaining"
37 Dish whose name means "stuffed" in Turkish
38 Country described in "One can't impose unity out of the blue on a country that has 265 different kinds of cheese"
39 Hearts
40 Beer whose ads once featured a sinister penguin
41 Bear necessities?
42 Stand up during a presentation
43 Upcycle, say
45 Tub top
48 Largest in a septet
49 Irish novelist celebrated on Bloomsday (June 16)
51 Laugh and a half
52 Plays it cool
53 Lady ___, founder of Cambodia's capital
54 "Undoubtedly"
55 Playing hooky, perhaps

DOWN

1 Macbeth, for one
2 Cry made while waving, perhaps
3 Animal in the Qatar Airways logo
4 Throwing ability
5 Systemically indispensable
6 Causes of some tan lines
7 "Honeymoon" singer ___ Del Rey
8 Where business is going downhill fast?
9 Mo. when Kwanzaa starts
10 Givers of priceless gifts
11 Water aerobics aid
12 Act badly, in a way
13 Squat
15 Corny junk?
21 "All I asked for was that simple thing!"
22 Urgent, hyperbolically
24 Appraise for accuracy or suitability
25 Flair
26 Hypothesized type of nuclear reaction
27 Object pantomimed by extending one's thumb and pinkie
28 Caricature
29 Contest featuring Apollo
30 Some small dogs, familiarly
31 Spanish title: Abbr.
36 Org. whose logo is a red elephant
39 SkyCourier maker
40 Count in jazz
41 Club collection
42 Tombstone name
44 CPR experts
45 Eponymous town in SE Connecticut
46 Expression of confidence
47 Shoulder muscle, informally
49 Gatsby's first name
50 Medical theaters, for short

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

W	E	S	C	R		M	O	H			H	A	L	F
O	P	E	R	A		A	L	A	I		A	M	O	I
N	E	G	E	V		L	E	W	D		S	I	G	N
G	E	O	D	E			S	K	I	M		N	E	C
			O	N	E	S			G	A	L	O	S	H
H	E	M	S		M	E	S	A		N	S	A		
A	R	I			I	A	M	N	O	T	A	C	R	
W	I	N	T	E	R	M	I	G	R	A	T	I	O	N
	C	O	U	N	S	E	L	E	D			D	O	E
		R	C	A		N	E	R	O		A	S	K	S
D	I	C	K	C	L			S	C	O	T			
U	G	H		T	A	Z	O			I	N	E	S	C
C	L	O	Y		R	O	X	Y		L	I	V	E	R
T	O	R	E		K	N	E	E		E	N	E	R	O
S	O	D	A			E	N	T		R	E	N	E	W

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